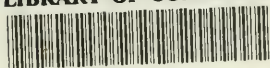


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*Henry S. Ranney*

# HISTORY

OF THE

## TOWN OF ASHFIELD

FRANKLIN COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

FROM ITS

### SETTLEMENT IN 1742 TO 1910

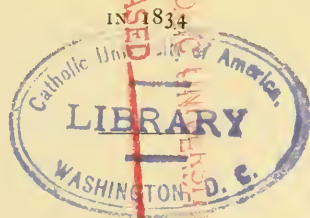
BY FREDERICK G. HOWES

ALSO A

### Historical Sketch of the Town

WRITTEN BY

REV. DR. THOMAS SHEPARD



PUBLISHED BY THE TOWN

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## PREFACE

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At a town meeting held Nov. 3, 1908, it was "Voted that a town history be published by the town, and that Frederick G. Howes, John M. Sears and Charles A. Hall be a Committee of publication."

It is due to the care and vigilance of our late veteran town clerk for fifty years, Henry S. Ranney, Esq., that the records of our town have been so well preserved. Not only the books of record, but scraps of paper relating to the history of the town have been treasured up.

The manuscript history written by Dr. Shepard over seventy years ago, when the early events were fresh in the minds of the older people then living, was carefully preserved by Mr. Ranney and is published here entire.

In 1888, Dr. E. R. Ellis of Detroit, Mich., published a book of nearly 500 pages, giving a genealogy of the descendants of Richard Ellis, the first settler of Ashfield, also many historical sketches of this town. Mr. Ranney and the writer furnished considerable matter for the work, also for the "Centennial Gazette," and in this book we have quoted from them quite freely, sometimes without giving credit. Dr. Ellis kindly presented our library with two copies of the book.

Mr. Barnabas Howes, in his "Sketches of Ashfield," has preserved many scraps of our town's history of which we have made use.

Mrs. Amanda F. Hall, with her rich store of historical lore, has been very generous in the lending.

Mr. A. W. Howes and Mr. A. L. Wing have furnished items of interest which they noted down as gathered from Mr. George Howes and other old people. The town officials have been obliging in giving free access to the old records and people in general have been very helpful in giving information sought for.

It could hardly be expected that genealogies of all the families would be given. Very full genealogies of the Hall, Howes, Phillips, Sears and other town families have been published,

and sketches of many of the old families have been given in the Ellis book. The town also has voted to publish its vital records with the aid given by the state, and these will give the births, marriages and deaths as far as can be ascertained from the records up to 1855, and will also give the place of burial of each person if it can be located.

We have given brief sketches of many of the early families in an endeavor to bring them down within convenient reaching distance of the descendants who may care to trace back to their ancestors. Many of the early settlers did not put their deeds on record, so it is not always easy to ascertain their first location and later sojournings.

Of the mass of material at hand the compiler's greatest difficulty has been to decide what to insert and what to reject. Tastes differ; what would please one, might be uninteresting and perhaps distasteful to another.

The pressure of various duties upon the other members of the publication committee has put a large share of the labor upon the chairman. But such has been the help and encouragement received from them, also the valuable aid given by his wife, he feels he can use the plural pronoun "we" without affectation. But for the errors which may appear, also for the general demerits and imperfections of the book, he holds himself responsible.

As we go over the doings of those who have gone before us, especially in the records of the church, we find so many of what now seem petty quarrels and small bickerings that lead us to look upon it as the church militant instead of the church spiritual, yet through it all there is a spirit of progress, an ever reaching forward for that which is best.

So we leave the task with an increased respect and love for the work of our fathers and for the good old town which gave us birth and a share in its many privileges.

F. G. H.

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*Rev. Thomas Shepard D.D.,*



**SKETCHES**

IN THE

**HISTORY OF ASHFIELD, MASS., FROM ITS  
FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE  
YEAR 1833**

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DEDICATION

To the inhabitants of the First Parish in Ashfield over whom the writer was settled in the Gospel ministry for nearly fourteen years, and with whom he lived in uninterrupted harmony and mutual confidence, these sketches in the history of their town are most affectionately and respectfully dedicated, by their most obliged and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Amherst, March, 1834.

## INTRODUCTION

It cannot be expected that a town comparatively of such recent origin, and so retired in its location as this, should afford, in the progress of its history, many events of general interest. To those, however, who were born and educated here, and to those who now live here, it must be a matter of considerable interest to know who were the pioneers of this town, and what are some of those principal events that have transpired here since the howl of the wild beast was alone heard through the forest, which spread unbroken over these hills and vales, now verdant under the cultivating hand of a numerous and thriving population. To the generations that may come after us, who may have little or no access to the facts connected with the early history of this place, which are familiar to us by tradition, a written history must be of increasing value. With a view of rescuing from oblivion many events connected with the early settlement of this town, and to hand them down for the information and amusement of those who may come after us, as well

as to revive in the memory of many now living, the things of former years, I have, by conversation with the few surviving fathers of the town, and by a diligent examination of its ancient and modern records, drawn out the following imperfect sketch of the principal events in its history.

#### BOUNDARIES

That portion of territory within the County of Franklin now called Ashfield was originally intended to embrace a tract of land six miles square; but from some unknown cause, its present boundaries do not lie in this exact form. The town, if reduced to regular dimensions, would form a square whose sides would extend six miles and one-fifth, inclosing an area of  $24,601\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

#### SOIL—CLIMATE—DISEASES—POPULATION

The surface of this town is broken into hills and valleys and contains but a comparatively small portion of arable land. Indian corn succeeds well, but English grain is of secondary quality compared with that raised on the lighter soils of Connecticut river. Wheat is seldom sown. Grazing may be said to be a principal object with the farming interest. Large dairies are kept here, and many tons of the finest wool are yearly furnished for the manufactories. The highest mountain in the town is that situated west of the pond. Its height is estimated at about 800 feet.\* There are no very considerable streams running through the town, inviting the manufacturing capitalist. The principal streams, however, furnish water power for all domestic purposes. Water from the springs and wells is generally of ready access and of the purest quality. The winters are long and severe. The snow generally falls about the first of December and continues until the first of April. During February and March the ways are frequently blocked and pass-

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\*Peter's Mountain, named from a colored man who lived there in early times. About 1885 Hon. James Russell Lowell, late U. S. Minister to England, purchased a site for a summer residence on the east side of this mountain. Soon after, his wife died, and Mr. Lowell removed to England, and, it is said, has decided not to build thereon. It is a very sightly place, and from its top, on a clear day, points in New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and New York are visible. It is 1840 feet in height.

ing difficult. The climate, though severe in winter, is nevertheless healthy. The prevailing disease with the middle-aged, upon these mountains, may be said to be consumption. This may be owing in part, perhaps, to the severe and variable winters. From the year 1819 to 1831, twelve years, one hundred and sixty-three persons died in this town over 12 years of age. Of these, nine died by casualties, or, as is commonly said, by accident; twenty-one of old age, and ten by diseases unknown to the writer; leaving one hundred and twenty-three persons over 12 years of age who have died in consequence of some definable disease. Of these 123 persons, fifty-four—nearly *one-half*—died with the consumption. Dysentery has frequently prevailed among children during the months of August and September. In 1825 twenty-one under five years died in this town, most of whom were carried off by the above complaint. During 1829 and 1830 the scarlet fever or canker rash prevailed very extensively, and in several instances proved mortal to children.

The average number of deaths during the fourteen years of the writer's connection with this people was a fraction over twenty-two a year, which would be one from every twenty-five of its inhabitants. The highest number of deaths in any one year during this period was *thirty-seven*; the lowest number, *thirteen*.

The population of Ashfield in 1820 was 1,748; in 1830 it was 1,732. The town contains four houses for religious worship, one academy, thirteen schoolhouses, two hundred and fifty dwelling-houses, three taverns, five stores, two gristmills, nine sawmills, three clothier shops and three carding machines. It also has two machines for turning broom handles, five blacksmith shops and two tanneries.

#### FIRST SETTLEMENT

The original name of this place was *Huntstown*; a name given to it in honor of Capt. Ephraim Hunt, of Weymouth. In the year 1690 this gentleman was sent out, by order of Government, as commander of a company of men selected from Weymouth and vicinity, in an expedition against the Canadas, in a contest between the English and French, commonly called King William's war. This war commenced in the year 1690 and termin-

ated in 1697. It was attended with many disastrous consequences to the American Colonies. An infuriated horde of savage warriors were let loose upon our scattered and defenceless population. The company under the command of Capt. Hunt composed a part of an expedition fitted out by the united colonies of New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, for the reduction of Montreal and Quebec, then in the hands of the French. A combination of unfortunate circumstances, however, defeated the design, and the expedition, after encountering numerous hardships and disasters, returned without accomplishing their object. The success of the expedition had been so confidently anticipated that no express provision had been made for the payment of the troops. Massachusetts, in the low state of her finances, issued bills of credit as a substitute for money; and in the year 1736, after a delay of more than forty-six years, redeemed those bills; at least, so far as the aforesaid company was concerned, by granting them, their heirs or legal representatives, a tract of land within the limits of this town. In the conditions of the grant express provision was made for the early settlement of the town, the erection of a meetinghouse, the settlement of a learned and orthodox minister, and the cause of common schools. By a Committee of General Court sixty-three lots, called Rights, containing from fifty to sixty-three acres each, according to the quality of the land, were set off and numbered, to be disposed of as follows: One right to be given to the first settled minister, one right for the use of the ministry, and one right for the use of common schools. The remaining sixty rights were to be divided by lot among the officers and privates of the aforesaid company, their heirs or legal representatives. The grantees—or Proprietors, as they were henceforth called—held their first meeting at Weymouth, where most of them resided, March 13, 1738, and on the 24th of July, 1739, they met again at the same place and drew lots for their respective rights, set off for them by government in this town.

The early settlement of the town being a desirable object with the proprietors, inasmuch as it would tend to enhance the

value of the property they now owned in it, they passed a resolve, May 28, 1741, that a bounty of £5 should be paid to each of the first ten of their number who should take actual possession of their respective rights, build a house and bring under cultivation six acres of land individually. How many of those men who endured the toils and privations of the Canada expedition lived to receive their bounty of land, does not appear; but the lapse of forty-six years from the expiration of that expedition, very probably had carried the greater part of them to that "bourn from whence no traveler returns," and their heirs alone remained to realize the tardy remuneration which should have long before fallen to those who had sustained the burden and heat of that perilous day. Nor does it appear from the records that any of the original proprietors ever settled upon their lands in person. Their rights were sold to others of a more adventurous spirit, from time to time, as they had opportunity. In the meantime taxes began to accumulate upon them, and many of them were parted with for a little more than was sufficient to meet the demands of the collector.

The precise year when a permanent settlement was made in this town I have not been able to ascertain.\* Soon after the lots were drawn, in 1739, it doubtless became the temporary abode of emigrants, as they came out from time to time to pioneer the wilderness. From the best information I have been able to obtain, I have been led to fix the first permanent settlement of this town about the year 1745.† The first family that pitched their tent upon these hills as permanent residents was that of Mr. *Richard Ellis*, a native of Dublin, in Ireland. Respecting the immigration of this gentleman from that distant land to America, tradition has handed down in the family the following account, which, if true, is only in accordance with many of the like kind—the result of the cupidity and knavery of unprincipled shipmasters. The story is this: Mr. Ellis was the only son of a widow. A wealthy planter living in Virginia,

\*A corn mill was built in the year 1743. It is believed that a permanent settlement was made in 1741.

†Preaching was had here as early as 1742. See Proprietors' Records, pp. 51, 54 and 55.

a native of Ireland, having no children, made application to his friend in Dublin to send him out some youth of promise, to be adopted into his family and brought up under his care and patronage. Young Ellis was selected and sent out for this purpose. On his embarkation his passage was paid and an agreement made with the captain of the ship to land him safely on the coast of Virginia. Faithless to his trust, he brought the youth to Boston and there sold him for his passage money. After serving the time thus unjustly extorted from him he removed from Boston, and at length settled in Easton, where he was married. From Easton he came to this town. The first tree was felled by his hands, on White Brook, a small stream running a little to the west of the dwelling of Mr. Phineas Flower. He built for his family the first habitation in the north-eastern section of the town—a log cabin, partly under ground, in the side of the hill, about fifty rods to the east of Mr. John Belding's, near the ancient burying yard, and where the new road runs. The next immigrant to this lonely wilderness was Mr. Thomas Phillips, with his family, from Easton, whose sister was the wife of Mr. Ellis. Mr. Phillips built for himself a log house about one-half of a mile to the north of the dwelling of his only fellow-townsmen, Mr. Ellis. Soon a third family was added—that of Mr. Chileab Smith, from that part of Hadley now called South Hadley. Mr. Smith settled on the spot which the house of his son, Chileab Smith, now occupies. Mr. Smith, the present occupant, now in his 92d year,‡ was about 8 years old when his father removed to this town. To the retentive memory and free communication of this venerable father and pillar in the town I am indebted for many of the facts here recorded.

Among the earliest accessions to the settlement as it now consisted of three families, was Dea. Ebenezer Belding, from Hatfield, and Samuel Belding, from Deerfield, with their families. Other settlers came in from time to time, from different quarters. A number of families joined them from the southern

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‡He died in the year 1843, aged 100 years and 8 months.—H. S. R.



part of Connecticut, so that by the year 1754 they numbered from ten to fifteen families and nearly one hundred souls.

#### TRIALS OF THE SETTLERS—SETTLEMENT ABANDONED

This little colony of immigrants, thus removed from their friends and from civilized society, in the midst of a mountainous wilderness, with scarcely any means of intercourse with those they had left behind, were permitted, under the watchful hand of Providence, to pursue their labors with comfortable success, subjected, of course, to a thousand self-denials incident to the pioneers of the forest, of which we, in these days of pampered indulgence, can form no adequate conception. For a number of years they had no other means of grinding their corn than by a mill turned by a horse. They had also to contend with bad roads, with rapid streams without the convenience of bridges, and with deep snows in the winter without the means of maintaining a beaten path. But all these inconveniences could be endured so long as they were secure from the attacks of the merciless savages, that still prowled around the infant settlements of our country, seeking whom they might devour. Such security and quietness, however, they were not long permitted to enjoy. The year 1754 was memorable for the breaking out of fresh hostilities between the French and the English. This war let loose again the Indians upon the defenceless frontier settlements of our colonies. During the month of June of this year a party of men at work near Rice's fort, in the upper part of Charlemont, was attacked by a body of Indians, and two of their number were killed and two taken prisoners. The tidings of this Indian massacre spread abroad and quickly reached the settlement in Huntstown and occasioned great alarm. Being few in number, and with small means of defense, they had no other alternative than to fly back to the older settlements, or to expose their wives and children to the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage foe. After a hasty deliberation the former course was resolved on. Accordingly, on the same afternoon in which they received the tidings from Charlemont, they abandoned their houses, improvements, stores, etc., except



such as could be transported on horseback, and set off, one and all, for the older settlements on Connecticut River. A middle-aged woman, the mother of the present Chileab Smith, traveled ten miles on foot before they encamped for the night. What is now Conway was then a part of Deerfield and a howling wilderness, without an inhabitant or a shelter to protect the refugees. Their first halt was at Bloody Brook, where they spent the night. Early the next morning the few inhabitants of the latter place abandoned their dwellings and joined them in their various dispersions to places of greater security. This sudden abandonment of their possessions, after having just gotten into a condition of comfortable living, could not have been otherwise than a sore trial to the first settlers of this town. It must have involved them in very considerable loss of property, besides being a very serious disappointment to their plans and prospects. But it appears to have been submitted to by them with that patient endurance and undaunted fortitude for which the men of that perilous period were so eminently distinguished.

#### RETURN OF THE SETTLERS—MEANS OF PROTECTION

According to the best information within my reach, the time during which the settlers were absent from their possessions was between two and three years. It is not unlikely, however, that during this period individuals might have visited this place; but they did not presume to return with their families until the time specified. After the return of the refugees to their possessions in Huntstown, the war still continuing, their first object was to erect a fort for their common defense. This was accomplished on the ground occupied by Mr. Smith, and principally at his own expense. The area inclosed by the fort was a square piece of ground containing 81 square rods. It was constructed of upright logs of sufficient thickness to be bullet proof, set three feet into the earth and rising twelve feet above. The inclosure had but one gate, opening to the south, which was always shut and strongly barred during the night. Within the fort stood the dwelling of Mr. Smith, which served as a garrison within which the settlers felt secure from attack during

the night. On its roof was constructed, of logs, a tower of sufficient magnitude to contain six men with their arms. Port-holes were so arranged in its sides as to afford its inmates a fair aim at their assailants without, while secure from their balls within. This house stood in the center of the fort, and on the same ground now occupied by the dwelling of Chileab Smith.

After remaining in this state for about one year, standing on their own defense—keeping watch by night, and laboring by day with their arms by their side—they solicited and obtained from the authorities of the colony a company of nine soldiers, under the command of a sergeant by the name of Allen, for their greater security. This guard arrived, under the general order of Col. Israel Williams, June, 1757. This company continued in the settlement until the close of the war, which was about two years from the time of their arrival. Their duty was to go, under arms, with the people, to protect them in their labors during the day, and to return with them into the fort and, in their turn, stand sentinel during the night. In the process of time, and before the close of the war, another fort, six rods square, was built by the settlers, in the same manner as the first, about one mile and a half southwest of it, near the house now occupied by Mr. Sears. This fort was used for the same purposes as the other.

In the good providence of God the settlement was preserved safe from the attack of the enemy. Nor were any Indians discovered near it except in one instance. As a daughter of Mr. Smith was walking out one evening, just as the sun was setting, she discovered an Indian within about twenty rods of the fort, surveying it very attentively. With great haste and terror she flew back to the gate and gave the alarm: "The Indians are upon us!" The soldiers immediately rallied and commenced pursuit; but darkness soon coming on, they returned without discovering the enemy. During the night they slept upon their arms and early next morning renewed their search through the woods, but saw nothing save the evident trail of a small hunting party, probably sent out to reconnoiter the settlement; but, finding it well garrisoned, they presumed not to molest them

afterward. For about two years the first settlers of this town were destined to live in this state of constant agitation and alarm. Often were their sympathies deeply excited by the narration of savage barbarities committed upon their more unfortunate fellow-citizens in other places. They felt themselves in jeopardy every hour. As they retired to rest each night they knew not but that they should be aroused by the yell of the war whoop, to behold their dwellings in flames, and their wives and little ones in the merciless grasp of the wild men of the woods. The taking of Quebec by the enterprise and daring of the gallant Gen. Wolfe, in 1759, restored peace to the colonies. The soldiers stationed here were disbanded, and the settlers, to their unspeakable satisfaction, were again permitted to pursue their daily avocations without fear of molestation.\*

#### PROPRIETORS' ACTS

The first meeting of the proprietors was held in Weymouth, or Braintree, as the town was originally called, March 13, 1738. They afterwards met at Hadley, then at Hatfield, and finally, in 1754, in Huntstown. The following gentlemen, in the order in which their names are here recorded, served as proprietors' clerks, viz: William Crane, Richard Faxon, Israel Williams, Esq., Ephraim Marble, Reuben Belding, Jacob Sherwin, Esq., Ephraim Williams, Esq.

The proprietors took early measures to supply the settlement with mills. They built, at their own expense, in the year 1743, the first grist mill on Pond Brook, about 100 rods northeasterly from the Episcopal Church, where the remains of a similar establishment may now be seen. Subsequently, in the year 1753, they erected a saw mill on Bear River, about half a mile east of the dwelling of Israel Phillips.

At the commencement of this sketch we noticed in the original grant express provision for the support of an orthodox ministry. The fathers of New England were the descendents of the Puritans. Although they sought no alliance between Church and State, they knew full well that no government could secure the

\*In 1761 there were 19 families residing here.

morality and happiness of a people without the prevalence of pure and undefiled religion. Actuated by the same spirit, the proprietors took early measures to secure to the town the stated ministration of the Gospel. At a meeting held November, 1751, a sum of money was raised to supply the settlement with preaching. In 1763 they settled a Congregational minister, and in 1767 they erected and finished a convenient house for public worship. But more concerning these things will be related in its more appropriate place.

#### DOINGS OF THE TOWN—ACT OF INCORPORATION

The records of the town previous to 1776 are very imperfectly preserved. There are remaining in the town clerk's office only a few separate scraps of paper bearing date prior to the aforesaid year. Of this early period I have been able to glean only the following items:

The first town meeting of which any record remains was held March 8, 1762, at the dwelling house of Jonathan Sprague. Ebenezer Belding was chosen Moderator, and Samuel Belding town clerk. The business was not of sufficient importance to be noticed here.

In June, 1765, by act of General Court, the town was incorporated by the name of *Ashfield*. The warrant to call the first meeting under the act of incorporation was issued by Thomas Williams, Esq., of Deerfield, and directed to Samuel Belding, clerk of this town. The first town officers under the incorporation were: Benjamin Phillips, Town Clerk; David Alden, Treasurer; Chileab Smith, Moses Fuller, Thomas Phillips, Selectmen.\*

The subject of common schools began early to engage the attention of the fathers of this town. They seemed fully to understand the orthodox doctrine—that a free government can only be sustained by an intelligent population. Accordingly, they voted, in 1772, to divide the town into three school districts and to build a schoolhouse.†

\*See the Town Book of Records—copied in 1857—page 6.—H. S. R.

†In the year 1766, at the first annual meeting subsequent to its incorporation, they voted £4 for the school.

According to the records, the first representative chosen for the purpose of acting in the affairs of the State was Capt. Elisha Cranston. In 1775 this gentleman was chosen to represent the town in the congress to be convened at Watertown, Boston then being in the possession of the British troops.

#### WAR OF THE REVOLUTION

A period now approached fraught with the most trying scenes ever experienced by the citizens of these United States. It was the War of the Revolution. In the events which preceded and attended that trying period, the citizens of this town, although removed from the principal scene of action, were nevertheless deeply interested, and in them they took a decided part. As early as September, 1774, when events in and about Boston began to wear the aspect of hostilities, and the first Continental Congress had commenced its session in Philadelphia, the following covenant, previously drawn up by a committee chosen for the purpose, was signed by Benjamin Phillips and sixty-four others, citizens of this town:

"We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of Ashfield, from a principle of self-preservation, the dictate of natural conscience, and a sacred regard to the constitution and laws of our country, which were instituted for the security of our lives and property, do severally and mutually covenant, promise and engage, with each other and all of us:

"1. That we profess ourselves subject to our Sovereign Lord the King, and hold ourselves in duty bound to yield obedience to all his good and wholesome laws.

"2. That we bear testimony against all the oppressive and unconstitutional laws of the British Parliament, whereby the chartered privileges of this province are struck at and cashiered.

"3. That we will not be aiding, nor in any way assisting, in any trade with the Island of Great Britain, until she withdraws her oppressive hand, or until a trade is come into by the several colonies.

"4. That we will join with our neighboring towns in this province, and sister colonies in America, in contending for and

defending our rights and privileges, civil and religious, which we have a just right to do, both by nature and by charter.

“5. That we will make preparation, that we may be equipped with ammunition and other necessaries, at town cost, for the above purposes.

“6. That we will do all we can to suppress petty mobs, trifling and causeless.”

That the signing of these articles of covenant was not a mere matter of unmeaning form appears evident from the fact that in the following August the town voted to send an agent to Albany for the purpose of purchasing guns and ammunition, at the expense of the town. At length affairs at headquarters came to a crisis. On the 19th of April, 1775, an attack was made by a column of the British army, under the command of Maj. Pitcairn, upon our unoffending yeomanry at Lexington; and thenceforth commenced that unequal conflict which, after eight years of toil, privation and blood, resulted, in the providence of God, in the independence of these United States.

Such was the poverty of our government, and such their inability to raise the necessary means of sustaining an army sufficient to face the hosts of Britain, that at the commencement of hostilities it, of necessity, devolved upon the patriotism of the towns from which the soldiers were drafted, to furnish them with supplies and, in many instances, to become responsible for their wages during service. The citizens of this town, as their records fully evince, did not remain idle spectators of this contest. They fell not behind the spirit of the times in their devotion to the cause of freedom, and their willingness to sacrifice almost any temporal comfort in securing it to themselves and their posterity.

It would extend altogether beyond the limits of this sketch to quote at length the patriotic doings of this town in lending their aid to encourage and carry forward the War of the Revolution. A few facts selected from their records is all that my limits will permit me to notice.

In fully estimating the sacrifices made by our fathers in coming forward with their voluntary contributions in sustaining the



War of the Revolution, we must take into the account two important circumstances: first, the fact of their having just begun to subdue the wilderness, and the consequent state of dependence in which most of them were placed in regard to the necessary means of subsistence; and, secondly, the uncertain and changeable state of their monied currency. Notwithstanding these pressing embarrassments, we find the inhabitants of this town at one time voting, in open town meeting, to furnish the army with a lot of coats. At another time we find them offering a bounty to such as might enlist from among them to serve in the war; and at another, voting a sum of money to purchase provisions to be sent to the famishing army. In 1779 the town voted to pay the soldiers enlisted from among them, for nine months' service, forty shillings per month in addition to the bounty offered by General Court—the value of the money to be regulated by corn at 2s. 6d., rye at 3s. 4d., and wheat at 4s. 6d. per bushel. In 1780 the town voted to give, by way of encouragement, to each man who should enlist in the army for three years, "twenty calves." Said calves were to be procured in the following May and kept at the town's cost until the three years had expired. How many of these men returned to receive their bounty, then grown to be oxen and cows, does not appear. In 1781 the town voted to raise "ninety silver dollars" to purchase the amount of beef that fell to their share for the army. The same year eight men were enlisted from this town for three months' service who were to receive from the town treasury £4 per month, and \$10 each before they marched. In 1777 Rev. Nehemiah Porter, in consequence of the enfeebled state of his people, and the consequent depreciation of his support, joined the army on the North River [Hudson] in the capacity of Chaplain, and continued with them until the capture of Burgoyne.

During this severe and protracted controversy with the mother country the people of this town, in common with their brethren in other parts of the provinces, suffered great embarrassments in consequence of the fluctuating state of their paper currency. The enormous depreciation of this currency in 1780



may be learned from the fact that during that year the town raised and expended upon the highways *three thousand pounds!* It was the custom of the town, at their annual meeting in March, to choose a "Committee of Safety, to do what in them lay to regulate the price of provisions and to ease the burdens of the people." A Committee of Correspondence was also appointed annually, to confer with similar committees in other places, in relation to the trying and critical state of public affairs.

One item of record in these troublous times—"times which" emphatically "tried men's souls"—I cannot omit to notice, although it is somewhat of a delicate nature; but inasmuch as it evinces that ever vigilant and stern spirit which characterized the patriot of that generation, I shall be excused by omitting names in the narrative: At a legal meeting held July 18, 1777, it was voted "that Aaron Lyon be a meet person to procure evidence against certain persons who are thought to be inimical to the American States." At a subsequent meeting, in August following, the Selectmen were requested to bring in a list of persons whom they viewed to be of the above description. This report contained the names of nine persons, among whom were some of the most respectable and leading men in the town. Whereupon it was voted that the persons thus reported "appear so unfriendly to the American States that they ought to be brought to proper trial." It was also voted at the same meeting, these suspected men "be committed to close confinement in this town." One of the prisoners, however, in consequence of the sickness of his family, was exempted from confinement on condition of delivering up his arms and ammunition. The others were forthwith dispatched to a private dwelling, under a strong guard selected and supported by the town. After continuing thus imprisoned for about seven days and nights the town met again and voted "to dismiss the guard and release the prisoners from close confinement." This transaction is but a faint specimen of what transpired in every section of the country between the resolute and the timid, the friends and the foes of war. Many a house was divided against itself; friends, neighbors, brethren, took different sides in the contest and were fiercely

arrayed against each other. Nor can it be a matter of wonder that men of wisdom and foresight should have opposed resistance to the power of Britain; so unequal was the contest and, in human view, so very improbable the attainment of any permanent good on the part of our infant colonies. But the ways of Providence are not as our ways; the result exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the friends of the Revolution; the God of Heaven went forth with our armies and the victory was on our side. Never was there a contest between nations in the decision and determination of which the overruling hand of God was more manifest; and the patriots of that day were led to feel that deliverance from the overwhelming power of Britain could alone proceed from the Power that ruleth the nations. Hence they looked to Heaven, and fasted, and prayed for help from above; nor did they pray in vain. In July, 1777, in legal town meeting, it was voted that "this town will do all that lies in their power to suppress vice, and especially that they will use their endeavors to prevent profane cursing and swearing, that the name of God be not blasphemed among them."

#### ADOPTION OF A STATE CONSTITUTION

The question whether this Commonwealth should form for itself a constitution in consonance with the national compact already signed and adopted, became the subject of general discussion. In August, 1779, Capt. Benjamin Phillips and Capt. Samuel Bartlett were chosen delegates to attend a convention about to be held at Cambridge for the purpose of forming a constitution for the Commonwealth. These gentlemen were instructed by the town, among other things, to use their endeavors that an article be inserted in said constitution, "that each Representative, previous to his belonging to General Court, shall be solemnly sworn not to pass any acts or laws where his constituents shall be in any sense, name or nature, oppressed or forced in matters of religion." On this subject a portion of the people of this town felt peculiarly sensitive, for reasons which will hereafter be noticed.

In the following year came up the important question respecting the adoption of the constitution prepared by the afore-

said convention and sent out by them for the approval of the people. In open town meeting this constitution was taken up, debated and acted upon, article by article. The result was, that while many of its provisions were approved by a majority of the town, others were rejected. The *third article* in the Bill of Rights, which proposed that the preaching of the Gospel should be supported by taxation, was rejected, on the ground that it was "unconstitutional to human nature and nothing in the word of God to support it." The article specifying the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court by the Executive was rejected, and a substitute proposed, viz: that they should be elected annually by the Legislature. The article constituting the Senate an essential part of the Legislature was rejected, on the ground that such a distinct body was unnecessary. Those articles specifying the pecuniary qualifications of the different officers of government, and of voters in town meeting, were rejected by a majority of the votes of this town. An amendment was proposed that Justices of the Peace, instead of being appointed by the Governor, should be elected by ballot annually, in legal town meeting, and commissioned by the Governor. It was also proposed that town clerks be the acknowledgers and registers of deeds, and that the Probate office be lodged in the hands of the Selectmen, and the Town Clerk be *ex officio* Clerk of Probate.

These transactions are referred to for the purpose of exhibiting the views of our fathers respecting the science of civil government. While it was happy for our Commonwealth that most of the alterations here proposed did not prevail, it is worthy of notice that the views expressed in relation to the Bill of Rights on the prevailing views of the Commonwealth at the present day, and after the lapse of half a century, have effected an essential alteration of this article in the constitution.

In the order of chronology it may be proper here to notice an incident which occurred here in 1781. During this year the north part of this town was infested with a company of vagrant religious fanatics called "Tremblers." Such extravagance and disorder and indecency were exhibited by them in their inter-

course with the inhabitants, and especially in the acts of worship, that the people living in the vicinity where they located themselves became very seriously annoyed and presented them to the authorities of the town as a public nuisance. Whereupon it was voted in legal town meeting that "the Selectmen be requested to warn said straggling Tremblers now in town, and those that shall come in hereafter, to depart in twenty-four hours or expect trouble."

#### PECUNIARY EMBARRASSMENT—SHAYS' INSURRECTION

In 1782 the pecuniary pressure became very severe upon the inhabitants of this town and the community in general. The enfeebled and partially organized condition of the General Government rendered it necessary for individual States to make great efforts to maintain their credit and meet the demands which the progress of the war was constantly bringing upon them. Massachusetts felt under the necessity of levying a heavy tax upon the people. The result was murmurings and insubordination from every quarter. The people of this town voted not to collect the portion of the State tax assigned to them, and to recommend to their militia officers to resign their commissions. They drew up and signed a covenant for their mutual defense and sent out a committee to inform the neighboring towns of their doings. Other towns were excited to similar measures of resistance from similar causes. Taxes were heavy and money scarce; county conventions began to be held, and one event after another transpired until Shays' rebellion broke out, in 1786. Such were the embarrassments of the times that the people not only resisted the taxes of government, but the demands of common creditors. The regular sittings of the courts at Northampton, Worcester and Taunton were obstructed by the people convening in tumultuous assemblies. Thousands of our citizens in different parts of the Commonwealth were arrayed in rebellion against a government which they had just established at the expense of great toil and much blood. A majority of the people of this town joined in the common panic and took sides with the insurgents. By consent of a

majority of the Selectmen the magazine of the town was given into the hands of the rebels, and a militia officer and a company of soldiers volunteered their services and marched off to their assistance. But the same Almighty Hand that sustained our country during her contest with the hosts of England, carried her safely through these scenes of civil commotion, and caused them all to work together for good, to her future peace and permanency. With a few conflicts, and the loss of a few lives, the insurrection was quelled; the people, after further reflection, became satisfied that their embarrassments were occasioned rather by the necessary expenditures of the Revolution than by any defect in the government itself or the manner of its administration.

#### ADOPTION OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

The commotions narrated above convinced the people of New England that some stronger bond of union between the States, for their mutual protection, was necessary. Accordingly, a convention was called at Boston in 1787 for the purpose of consulting upon the adoption of the confederated constitution proposed by the Congress of the United States. Accordingly, Ephraim Williams, Esq., was chosen to represent this town in said convention, and instructed "to use his influence that said constitution doth not take place." But, notwithstanding the views of the good people of this town, said constitution did take place, and for nearly fifty years the people of this town, in common with their fellow-citizens throughout the Union, have rejoiced in the many blessings which it has imparted.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

It has been remarked that the original proprietors of this town took early measures to supply the first settlers with Gospel ordinances. In the original grant of the Soldiers' Rights two of them were reserved for the support of a learned and orthodox ministry; and in 1751 a sum of money was raised by the proprietors to supply the settlement with preaching. Rev. Mr. Dickinson, a Congregational minister from Hadley, was the first employed to preach in the settlement. Afterward they



were favored with the labors of Rev. Mr. Streeter. Their meetings were held in the dwelling of Deacon Ebenezer Belding, which stood on the same ground now occupied by a house on the opposite side of the way from Dimick Ellis, Esq. [Now (1864) Mr. Bardwell's—H. S. R.] Mr. Joshua Hall now (1887) owns and lives on this farm.

The first regular church formed in the town was of the Baptist denomination. It was constituted July, 1761, consisting of nine members. In the following August Rev. Ebenezer Smith, the eldest son of Chileab Smith, was ordained its pastor. In May, 1768, Nathan Chapin and seventeen others sent in a petition to General Court setting forth that they belonged to the persuasion called Anabaptists, and praying to be exempted from the taxation for the support of the Congregational ministry. This petition, after repeated and persevering efforts, during which the petitioners were subjected to many trying scenes, was at last granted. It is to be regretted that there should ever have been occasion, in this land of enlightened liberty, for such a petition as this. Nothing would seem to be more reasonable than that any religious denomination demeaning themselves as peaceable members of society, should enjoy free toleration in the exclusive maintenance of their own order. Our fathers fled hither that they might enjoy liberty of conscience in matters of religion. But it must be remembered, by way of apology for any seeming inconsistency in their legislative acts, that for a long while after the settlement of Plymouth the people of this land were very generally of one and the same denomination; hence their laws had respect to this particular denomination alone; and when in the process of events other sects sprang up, they were not so careful, perhaps, as enlightened Christian charity would have dictated, in so modifying their statutes as to give equal toleration to all who might conscientiously differ from them. Hence, in the tardy revision of the laws to meet the exigencies of the times, there were, without doubt, insulated cases of what would now be universally pronounced religious intolerance and oppression. But those were days when free toleration in the things of religion were but

imperfectly understood. The progress of nearly a century has thrown much light on this subject; we have occasion to thank God that we have fallen on better times. Let not the errors of those years of comparative darkness, long since gone by, be revived and handed down as a matter of reproach or recrimination between Christian brethren differing only in modes, and all enjoying, to their full satisfaction, liberty of conscience and equal toleration. For a long number of years the kindest feelings have been entertained between the Baptist and Congregational churches in this town.

In 1798, after a ministry of thirty-seven years in this town, Elder Smith was dismissed from his pastoral charge in good standing. He soon after removed to the western part of New York, where he continued to labor in different places until he reached the age of 89. He died at Stockton, in the County of Chautauqua, N. Y. Mr. Smith, though not favored with early opportunities for a systematic education, is represented to have been a man of strong native powers of mind, thoroughly orthodox in sentiment, and an acceptable preacher.

January 14, 1798, Elder Enos Smith, the youngest son of Chileab Smith, and brother of the former minister, was ordained pastor of this church, and still continues in this relation, having now reached the 85th year of his age and 36th of his ministry.

In 1800 this society, embracing a portion of the southeastern section of Buckland, obtained an act of incorporation. This church has, at different periods, experienced seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. This was particularly the fact during the winter of 1831, when considerable additions were made to their communion. The exact number of communicants now belonging to this church I am not able to state. In the spring of 1831 it was *one hundred and six*. Their first house of worship stood about fifty rods north of Mr. Chileab Smith's. About two years since the society erected a new and convenient meetinghouse, about one-half of a mile to the east of this spot.

This society, if not the oldest, is certainly among the oldest, of the Baptist denomination in the western section of Massa-



chusetts. It has always occupied ground peculiarly its own, having never interfered with that preoccupied by others. Its church is venerable for its age; many in it have been raised up for the Kingdom of Heaven. It is entitled to and, I doubt not, it receives, the prayers of the people of God of every name around it, for its peace and prosperity.

December 22, 1762, the Proprietors gave a call to Mr. *Jacob Sherwin* to settle with them in the work of the Gospel ministry. February 22, 1763, a Congregational church consisting of fifteen members was formed by an ecclesiastical council convened for the purpose, and on the following day Mr. Sherwin was, by the same council, ordained its pastor. The Articles of Faith and Covenant prepared by this council were consented to and signed by the following persons: Jacob Sherwin, Thomas Phillips, Nathan Waite, Ebenezer Belding, Timothy Lewis and Joseph Mitchell.

Mr. Sherwin's ministry in this place continued a little more than eleven years and two months. Difficulties arising between him and his people, he was finally dismissed by an ecclesiastical council and recommended to the confidence of the churches. During the ministry of Mr. S. eighty persons were added to this church, including those who became members at the time of its constitution. *Forty-nine* of these were admitted by profession and *thirty-one* by letters of recommendation from sister churches. The ordinance of baptism was administered to one hundred and nineteen persons.

Mr. Sherwin was born in Hebron, Conn., and was graduated at Yale College in 1759. After his dismissal from his pastoral charge he continued to reside in the town, became a Justice of the Peace, the first that was honored with this commission in the place, was elected clerk of the town for a number of years, and also clerk of the proprietors, and occasionally officiated as one of the Selectmen. Afterward he resumed the active duties of the ministry, removed to Shaftesbury, Vt., where he was installed and, as far as it appears, continued his labors until his decease.

December 22, 1774, Rev. Nehemiah Porter was installed pastor of this church and continued in this relation until his

decease, February 29, 1820, aged 99 years and 11 months. During Mr. Porter's active labors, until the settlement of his first colleague, it being about thirty-five years and a half, 334 persons were admitted to the church—240 by profession and 94 by letter. Eight hundred and fifty received the ordinance of baptism. During Mr. Porter's ministry the church enjoyed several seasons of religious revival. In 1780—a year distinguished in the annals of New England for the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the churches—there were numbers gathered into the Church of Christ in this place; but more particularly in 1797–8, during which season of precious interest upwards of eighty were added to the Congregational Church.

Rev. Mr. Porter was born in Ipswich, in this State, in 1720, just about one century from the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, and lived to witness the mighty events that signalized the revolution of almost an entire century from that memorable period. He was graduated at Cambridge College in 1745, and studied divinity with Prof. Wigglesworth, of that institution. He was first settled at Chebosco, now Essex, in the County of Essex. After his dismissal from that place he removed with his family into the British Dominions, in New Brunswick, where he labored for a number of years in the character of a missionary. From thence he came into this region and was finally installed over this people in 1774.

Mr. Porter was a man of active, energetic and commanding powers of mind. He was favored with a vigorous constitution and an uncommon strength and fullness of voice. His religious sentiments were those of the Reformation, and his style of preaching, though somewhat redundant—a characteristic of the age—was, nevertheless, energetic and impressive. During the War of the Revolution, his support in a great measure failing, in consequence of the severe pressure of the times, he obtained permission to join the army on the Hudson River, in the capacity of chaplain.—He was there during the conflict with Burgoyne and the capture of the British army. That event, so propitious to the American arms, he was wont to say was not

the result of human might or power, but by the arm of Jehovah of Hosts. During the heat of the battle which decided the fate of Burgoyne's army Mr. Porter, being with a reserve of men at a little distance from the scene of action, obtained permission of the officer to retire, with as many as were disposed, to a secluded spot at a little distance, for the purpose of prayer; and, while in the full hearing of the tremendous onset they were there calling upon the God of Armies to interpose with His mighty arm in behalf of the cause of liberty and religion, the noise of the battle died away and the victory of our arms was decisive. Perhaps there never was a contest since miraculous powers ceased, where the interposition of Heaven was more conspicuous, than in that which resulted in the independence of these United States.

Mr. Porter lived far beyond the common lot of men. He did not wholly cease from the labors of the ministry until he was over ninety years of age; and, indeed, until the last month of his life he was able to conduct the devotions of the family and to converse to the religious edification of his friends. With long life he was satisfied. He came to his grave in full age. He was gathered to his fathers like a shock of corn fully ripe in its season.

[Rev. Mr. Porter entered the pulpit of his church, and took part in the service, when in the 100th year of his age. He was taken from his house and seated on a chair placed on a "stone boat," was conveyed to the meetinghouse. Mr. Porter, the present (1887) proprietor of the Ashfield Hotel, on the Plain, is a descendent of his].

*Rev. Alvan Sanderson* was installed colleague pastor with Rev. Mr. Porter, June 22, 1808, and was dismissed at his own request, on account of declining health January 3, 1816, after an active and successful ministry of seven years and six months. During this period sixty were added to the church—forty-one by profession, nineteen by letter; number of baptisms, seventy-four. Mr. Sanderson was born in Deerfield and graduated at Williams College. Although his public ministry was short, yet it proved a rich blessing to the people of his charge. His talents were of the active kind, and, though he did not excel as a preacher, he

was peculiarly qualified to do good as a pastor in his daily intercourse with all classes. His labors were, emphatically, in season and out of season. In the literary, moral and religious education of the young he took a lively interest, and to promote this he labored incessantly. The burden of duties which he took upon himself impaired his health, and the fatal blow was struck by an attempt to fill with his voice the illy-constructed house of worship recently erected by his congregation. The effort to be heard in its high pulpit, and from beneath elevated ceiling, produced a hemorrhage of the lungs and brought on a gradual decline. In the meridian of life his sun went down. By the last acts of his life Mr. Sanderson more fully developed the influence of that charity which seeketh not her own, over his own heart. Having no family of his own to provide for, the most of the property which he had acquired by his industry and habits of economy he bequeathed to purposes of public learning and religion. The cause of foreign and domestic missions shared each a distinct legacy in his will. To the society over which he had been settled he made a generous donation as a permanent fund for the support of the ministry; and, lastly, the academy which bears his name was originated and endowed, in his earnest desire to do all in his power to improve the minds and hearts of the rising generation in learning and piety. He fell asleep in Jesus June 22, 1817, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. The memory of the just is blessed. The name of Alvan Sanderson will long be held in grateful remembrance by many surviving members of his beloved flock.

After the dismissal of Mr. Sanderson the society continued destitute of a pastor for more than three years. During this period it was greatly afflicted with dissensions—the trying question who should be its next minister had well nigh broken down its energies and prostrated its ability to sustain the ordinances of the Gospel. And yet, even in these troublous times, the Lord did not forget his covenant people. During this season of destitution a revival took place which brought twenty into the fold of the Redeemer.

The writer of these sketches was ordained colleague pastor

with Rev. Mr. Porter, over this church and society, June 19, 1819, and continued in this relation with mutual harmony and confidence until May, 1833, when, in consequence of feeble health and the hope of being more useful in a more active sphere of ministerial labor, he was, at his own request, and by the kind concurrence of his people, dismissed by a mutual council. He was born in Norton and graduated at Brown University in 1813. During his ministry in this place, which continued nearly fourteen years, three seasons of special revival were enjoyed. The first was during the winter of 1821-2, when upwards of eighty were added to the church; the second was in the winter of 1829-30, when about the same number was added; the third was in the autumn, when about thirty-five were gathered into the visible fold of Christ. During the whole of his ministry the number of admissions has been 274, all but thirty-two of which have been by profession. The number of baptisms during the same time were *three hundred and five*. From the origin of the Congregational Church until the time of the writer's dismission, it being a little more than seventy years, 766 have been admitted to its communion and the ordinance of baptism administered to 1,405 persons. The number of living members at the above date, in regular standing, was 290, of whom 104 were males and 186 females.

In May, 1833, Rev. Mason Grosvenor was installed pastor of this church and society. Mr. Grosvenor was born in Pomfret, Conn., and graduated at Yale College. Since the settlement of Mr. G. some additions have been made to the church. May the Holy Spirit continue to descend upon it as rain upon the mown grass, and many be added unto it from time to time, of such as shall be saved.

The following brethren have officiated as deacons in this church in the order in which their names are recorded, viz: Ebenezer Belding, Joshua Sherwin, John Bement, Jonathan Taylor, John Porter, Enos Smith, Elijah Paine, Samuel Bement, Daniel Williams, Jared Bement. Deacons Paine, Williams and Jared Bement are still in office.

The first Congregational house of worship was built by the



Proprietors. The frame was set up on the hill west of the dwelling of Dimick Ellis, Esq., but before it was covered it was taken down and set up on the southwest corner of the old burying ground on the plain. The removal took place in 1767. The present house of worship was raised July, 1812, and occupied by the congregation in the autumn of 1813. May the glory of this latter house be greater than that of the former.

In 1814 a second Baptist society was formed in this town, and a meetinghouse built on what is called the Flat, about one mile east of the Congregational Church. For a number of years Elder Loummus officiated as the minister of this society. In 1820 Mr. L. removed into the State of New York. Since then they have had the occasional labors of Rev. Orra Martin, from Bristol, Conn., who resides in the town. This society shared in the revival of 1829-30, when a church was organized with twenty-seven members. Their present number, probably, does not vary much from what it was then.

In 1820 an Episcopal society was formed in this town, and in 1829 a neat and commodious house erected and consecrated by the Bishop, by the name of St. John's Church. The society has been supplied at different times by the labors of Rev. Titus Strong, Rev. Lot Jones, Rev. William Withington, Rev. Mr. Humphrey, and Rev. Silas Blaisdale, who now resides with them. Their number of communicants in 1831 was about thirty. Their number has probably increased since, but how many I have not the means of knowing.

During the four or five years past the Methodists have established a place of worship, near the southeast corner of the town, and their circuit preachers occasionally officiate in other parts of the town. They shared in the revival of 1830. Their number of regular communicants I have no means of ascertaining.

Each of these religious societies sustains a Sabbath school, through a part or all of the year, and has a library for the use of its scholars; that belonging to the Congregational Society contains rising of 500 bound volumes. Among these different denominations, mingled together throughout the town, a good

degree of harmony prevails. May the language of Abraham and Lot ever be theirs: "Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be brethren."

#### EDUCATION

The General Court, as we have before noticed, in their original grant to the proprietors, made express provision for the maintenance of common schools by reserving one right for this object. In the wisdom of our fathers the cause of education—one of the main pillars of a republican government—was not to be overlooked in the early settlement of the country. The annual income of the school lands is a little rising of one hundred dollars. To this an annual tax of about six hundred dollars is added, and expended in thirteen districts, according to the number of scholars in each. The whole sum thus expended averages about one dollar annually to each scholar. The quantity of instruction in each district varies according to the number of scholars; taken together it will average about six months to each district. Although the standard of common education is not what it ought to be, and what it might be, in this town, yet it has much improved during the last ten years, and is not now inferior, it is believed, to what it is in other towns similarly situated in the Commonwealth. The occasional establishment of select schools in the vicinity, and particularly those sustained by Miss Mary Lyon, now of Ipswich, has done much to qualify teachers for the more successful management of district schools.

After Rev. Mr. Sanderson had resigned the duties of the ministry, his health remaining feeble, he prepared a building, one-half at his own expense, and in the spring of 1816 opened a school for the instruction of youth of both sexes in the higher branches of a useful education. Though soon interrupted in his personal labors, yet at his decease he laid the foundation for a continued seminary for the promotion of learning, morality and religion in the rising generation. In 1821 an act of incorporation was obtained under the name of *Sanderson Academy*, and in the autumn of the same year it went into permanent operation under the care of Mr. Abijah Cross, a graduate of



Dartmouth College. After Mr. C., followed successively in the labor of instruction, Messrs. A. Converse and S. W. Clark, from Dartmouth College; Messrs. B. B. Edwards, H. Flagg and R. C. Coffin, of Amherst College, and Rev. Silas Blaisdale. For a number of years past, in consequence of the deficiency of its funds, but more especially the want of the united patronage of the inhabitants of the town, it has almost wholly ceased its operation. It is melancholy to contemplate an institution founded in the prayers and charities of a man of God, going to disuse and decay in the midst of a population greatly needing its advantages, merely for the want of a little harmonious fostering care.

A social library containing about 175 well selected volumes, and yearly increased by an annual tax of fifty cents upon each share, has been in operation since 1815. During the continuance of the academy a debating society, and afterwards a lyceum, were productive of much interest and profit to the young people of the village.

#### TEMPERANCE

The inhabitants of this town, in common with their fellow-citizens located in a region of fruit and distilleries, have suffered much from the scourge of intemperance. For years the wave of liquid fire rolled over those hills and valleys, carrying disease and poverty and death in its trail, with scarcely an obstacle to withstand its course. Many of the distilleries, first set up for the distillation of mint, by a little additional expense of vats could be employed for a part of the year in distilling cider. It is believed that for a number of years there were as many as eight or ten of these magazines of destruction in operation in the town. It was almost as much a matter of course for the farmer to take his cider to the still and take home his stock of brandy for family use, as it was for him to carry his grain to the mill and furnish the staff of life for his household. But the times are changed—the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard against the enemy of all righteousness. In the spring of —a society was formed on the principle of total abstinence, consisting at first of twelve members. Many sober men were at

first in doubt whether it was not pressing the cause too far; farmers were people that they could not hire their labor without the use of ardent spirits. But on further consideration their difficulties vanished one after another; the members of the society increased rapidly, until in the course of a few months rising of 600 names were found in the temperance constitution. The enemies of the cause were alarmed; they made every effort in their power to stay the work of reform; a strong union between the lovers of strong drink, the lovers of the gain of it, and the lovers of office, was formed, and showed itself at the polls and wherever any attack could be made upon the friends of temperance. But still the good cause could not be put down; opposition only served to strike its roots deeper into the hearts of its friends; an efficient society was formed in the north section of the town, whose fruits were soon manifest in the work of reform. The friends of temperance of different religious denominations go hand in hand in the cause; and, although one or two distilleries, and a few retailing stores and some temperate drinkers stand in the way, yet a purifying process is in progress which will not stop until the whole town and region is reclaimed from the cruel grasp of this common enemy of God and of man.

"Fly swift around, ye wheels of time,  
And bring the welcome day."

#### PROFESSIONAL MEN

The following persons, originally inhabitants of this town, have been educated at college, viz: Rev. Preserved Smith, graduated at Brown University and settled in the ministry in Rowe; Rev. Freeman Sears, Williams College, settled in Natick and deceased in 1812; Rev. Samuel Parker, Williams College, residing in the State of New York; Frederick Howes, Esq., Cambridge College, attorney at law in Salem; Francis Bassett, Esq., Cambridge College, attorney at law in Boston; Rev. Elijah Paine, Jr., Amherst College, formerly settled in Claremont, N. H.; Rev. William P. Paine, Amherst College, settled in Holden; Rev. Charles Porter, Amherst College, settled in Gloucester; Rev. Morris White, Dartmouth College, settled

in Southampton; Rev. William Bement, Dartmouth College, settled in Easthampton; Leonard Bement, Esq.,\* Union College, attorney at law, Albany, N. Y.; Francis Gillett, Yale College, attorney at law in Ohio; Rev. John Alden, Jr., Amherst College, principal of Franklin Manual Labor School in Shelburn; Mr. Adell Harvey, Amherst College, student in Divinity; Rev. Anson Dyer, not publicly educated, laboring as an evangelist. Several young men are now in the process of a public education.

Hon. Elijah Paine, a native of Hatfield, has been the only attorney at law which has settled in this town until very recently. Mr. Paine has been a member of the Senate of this Commonwealth and the Chief Justice of the Court of Session in this county until the time of its dissolution. David Aiken, Esq., has recently opened an office as attorney at law in this town.

The following regular authorized physicians have resided in this town in the order in which their names occur: Moses Hayden, Phineas Bartlet, Francis Mantor, David Dickinson, afterwards settled in the ministry in Plainfield, N. H.; Hon. Enos Smith, a graduate of Dartmouth College, once a member of the Senate from Franklin County, now living in Granby; Rivera Nash, Green Holloway, Lee, Atherton Clark, now living in Cummington; William Hamilton, now in Providence, R. I.; Jared Bement, a native of this town; Charles Knowlton. The last two are now practising physicians in the town.

#### COUNTY AND TOWN OFFICERS

The following gentlemen have been commissioned Justices of the Peace while residing in this town, viz: Jacob Sherwin, Philip Phillips, Ephraim Williams, Elijah Paine, Enos Smith, Henry Bassett, Thomas White, Levi Cook, Dimick Ellis, James McFarland, Russell Bement, Chester Sanderson.

The following gentlemen have represented this town in the Legislature of the Commonwealth, viz: Capt. Elisha Cranston,

\*Judge Bement removed to Grand Rapids, Mich., about 1850, where he died twenty to twenty-five years later. He was a highly respected man.

Dea. Jonathan Taylor, Benjamin Rogers, Chileab Smith, Wm. Williams, Esq., Philip Phillips, Esq., Ephraim Williams, Esq., Hon. Elijah Paine, Henry Bassett, Esq., Thomas White, Esq., Hon. Enos Smith, Capt. Bethuel Lilley, Levi Cook, Esq., Dimick Ellis, Esq., Capt. Roswell Ranney, Dea. Samuel Bement, Chester Sanderson, Esq., Jonathan Sears, Seth Church, Anson Bement.

The following persons have served as Town Clerks, viz: Samuel Belding, Benjamin Phillips, Jacob Sherwin, Esq., Dr. Phineas Bartlet, Dr. Francis Mantor, Levi Cook, Esq., Hon. E. Paine, Capt. Selah Norton, Henry Bassett, Esq., Lewis Williams, Hon. Enos Smith, Dimick Ellis, Esq., James McFarland, Esq., Russell Bement, Esq., Wait Bement.

The following gentlemen have served as Town Treasurers, viz: Benjamin Phillips, David Alden, Dr. Phineas Bartlet, Warren Green, Jr., Ephraim Williams, Esq., Levi Cook, Esq., Hon. E. Paine, Charles Williams, Henry Bassett, Esq., Chester Sanderson, Esq.

The following gentlemen have served as Selectmen, viz: Ebenezer Belding, Reuben Ellis, Nathan Chapin, Philip Phillips, Esq., Moses Fuller, Chileab Smith, Thomas Phillips, Samuel Belding, Dea. Jonathan Taylor, Aaron Lyon, Samuel Allen, Timothy Lewis, Isaac Shepard, Capt. Joshua Taylor, Peter Cross, Dr. Bartlet, Jacob Sherwin, Esq., Dea. John Bement, Rowland Sears, Warren Green, Jr., Uriah Goodwin, John Sherwin, Thomas Stocking, Benjamin Rogers, Chileab Smith, John Ellis, Ephraim Williams, Esq., William Flower, Philip Phillips, Esq., Capt. John Bennet, Lemuel Spurr, Abner Kelley, Joshua Howes, Abiezer Perkins, Hon. E. Paine, Samuel Guilford, Ebenezer Smith, John Alden, Thomas White, Esq., Capt. Bethuel Lilley, Josiah Drake, Chipman Smith, Nathaniel Holmes, Dimick Ellis, Esq., Capt. Roswell Ranney, Jonathan Sears, Samuel Eldredge, Simeon Phillips, Sanford Boies, Austin Lilley, Seth Church, George Hall, Capt. William Bassett.

#### CASUALTY

In May, 1827, an event occurred near the center of this town of too signal importance in its history to be omitted in these

sketches. I refer to the accidental drowning of five persons in the Pond west of the Plain. Their names were Dea. David Lyon, a worthy man, aged 63, and his son, Aaron, aged 18, Arnold Drake, aged 28, and two sons of Mr. Eli Gray, William and Robert, one 15, the other 13. These persons, attended by a few others, left their families and friends on a beautiful morning in May, to follow their flocks to the place of washing, under as fair a prospect of returning at evening as ever they went out with in any previous morning in their lives; but, alas! they were all borne home lifeless corpses. In a fit of merriment, excited by a poisonous stimulant which was then deemed a necessary appendage to the washing of sheep, six of the company seated themselves in a log canoe, with two sheep, for the purpose of a short sail. On reaching deep water, about eight or ten yards from the shore, the canoe dipped water, filled and went under. Two of the company—the eldest son of Deacon Lyon and a boy—with the sheep, sprung for the shore and reached it safely; Drake, Lyon and the young Grays immediately sunk and disappeared. Dea. Lyon, from the shore seeing his son in danger, sprang in to his assistance, but on stepping suddenly from shoal to deep water immediately disappeared. It is remarkable that not one of them, after sinking the first time, ever rose again until their bodies were raised by others. Alarm was immediately given by those from the bank, the people of the village were soon on the spot and measures immediately set in operation to raise their bodies. A young man dove and brought up Dea. Lyon, who had been under perhaps fifteen minutes. They next succeeded in bringing up Drake, after perhaps thirty minutes' immersion; next, the body of young Lyon; and last, after being under about an hour, were brought up the bodies of the young Grays locked in each other's arms. Measures for resuscitation were immediately commenced on the shore, and prosecuted after they were carried to the house of Mr. Asa Sanderson for several hours, but all in vain; the vital spark had fled, nor could it be recalled; not the least sign of reanimation appeared in either of them. They were ensnared in an evil hour. In an unexpected moment their souls were required of

them. After all hope of recovering the drowned persons was given up messengers were dispatched to carry the sad tidings to the widows, children, parents, brothers and sisters of the deceased. Soon the messengers returned, bringing with them the widows of Dea. Lyon and Drake, and the daughter of Dea. L., who was the stepmother of the young Grays. The affecting scenes of that interview may in some faint measure be imagined, but not described. On the following day the funeral of these five corpses was attended in the presence of a large concourse of sympathizing friends and strangers, at the late dwelling of Dea. Lyon. An appropriate discourse was preached on the occasion by Rev. Mr. Martin, from Eccles. ix. 12, after which their remains were deposited in the graveyard by the Baptist meetinghouse, in the north part of the town. Who that witnessed any part of that appalling scene can pass by the banks of that secluded pond without recalling fresh to mind the events of that melancholy day? And who that ponders upon the events of that day can think lightly of the Saviour's exhortation: "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the hour when the Son of Man cometh."

#### CONCLUSION

But it is time to bring these sketches—already, perhaps, too far protracted—to a close. Permit me then, my brethren and friends, with whom I have been permitted quietly to sojourn for a time, in conclusion to say:

It is now about *ninety years* since the voice of the civilized emigrant first broke upon the silence of this, then lonely, wilderness. Three generations of men have come up and passed off the stage since your fathers came hither. The lofty forests which then crowned these hills and valleys have bowed to the power and industry of man, and given place to cultivated fields and thriving villages. The haunts of wild beasts have been supplanted by the abodes of civilized society. You of this generation roam securely over your fields, and sleep quietly on your beds, where once lurked in ambush the merciless savage, and where your fathers toiled by day and lay down at night



with their arms by their side. This goodly heritage, with all its civil, literary and religious blessings, purchased by their toils, privation and blood, you now enjoy. God forbid that you should prove so ungrateful as to despise such a birthright. Think not lightly, brethren and friends, of the talents committed to your care. Ninety years to come, and where will most of you be? Who will occupy your possessions? Who will dwell in your houses, roam over your hills and through your valleys, sit in your sanctuaries? Who will break the bread of life to the generations who are to come after you, and point the dying sinner to the Lamb of God? And what will be the character of the history which will fill up the intervening years? These are questions of solemn import, and the practical answer must be given by you of this generation. God in mercy grant that you may so live, and train up your children, and so aid in laying broad and deep and strong the foundations of knowledge, morality, religion and good government, that future generations, as they come to reap the happy fruits of your labors, may rise up and call you blessed, as you are permitted to do the memory of your fathers, now no more.

THOMAS SHEPARD.







*F. G. Howes*

## CHAPTER I

### BEGINNINGS

Very few towns have been so fortunate in the preservation of their records as Ashfield.

The earliest records of the Proprietors were begun in 1738. These original papers have not been preserved, but two years after, in 1740, a record book was purchased and the previous records copied into it. A committee chosen for the purpose certify in 1743 that "We have Proceeded and Carefully Examined and Compared the Said Entries with the Said Minutes or Coppys Recorded in the present Proprietors' Book and we find the Said Entries Truly and Exactly Recorded."

William Crane was the first clerk, and after his death Richard Faxon was chosen, the new clerk who so faithfully transcribed the records.

The Proprietors' Book purchased in 1740 cost thirty shillings, and is now in a fair state of preservation. It was a substantial volume bound in sheepskin, size 8 x 12½ inches and contained about 500 pages. The first part of the book, 146 pages, is filled with the votes and doings of the Proprietors, and the last part with the pages reversed contains 78 pages relating to the divisions of lots and their various changes. Some 270 pages in the middle of the book remain blank.

The first entry in the book is a copy of an Act of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, passed Dec. 5, 1735, which reads:

A Petition of Ebenezer Hunt & Others who were Officers & Soldiers (or their Descendants) in the Expedition Against Canada under the Command of Capt. Ephraim Hunt deced in the year 1690, Praying for a Grant of land for a Township in consideration of their hardships & Sufferings in the said Expedition

Read & in Answer to this Petition,

*Voted* That the prayer thereof be Granted and that [Mr. Speaker Quincy, Mr. Adam Cushing] together with such as shall be joined by the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Board be a Com<sup>tee</sup> at the Charge of the Government, to lay out a Township of the Contents of

Six Miles Square, in Some Suitable place Westward of Deerfield in the County of Hampshire, and that they Return a plat thereof to this Court within twelve Months for Confirmation; and for the More Effectual bringing forward the Settlement of the said Newtown.

*Ordered* that the said Town be laid out into Sixty three Equal Shares, One of which to be for the first Settled Minister, One for the Ministry and one for the School, and that on each of the other Sixty Shares the pet<sup>rs</sup> do within three years from the Confirmation of the plan have Settled one good family who shall have a house built on the Homlott of Eighteen feet Square and Seven feet Stud at the least and finished, that each Right or Grant have Six Acres of Land brought to and plowed or brought to English Grass or fitted for mowing, that they Settle a Learned Orthodox Minister and build and finish a Convenient Meetinghouse for the Publick Worship of God and that each Settler give Bond to the Province Treasurer of twenty pounds for fulfilling the Conditions of this Grant; provided that in Case any of the Lotts are not duly Settled in all Regards as aforesaid; then such Lott with the Rights thereof to Revert to and be at the disposition of the Province.

We can see that the conditions imposed on the petitioners made their duties very heavy, in requiring so much to be accomplished in so short a time. A later Act extended the time from three years to five.

In 1736 the Committee report that there were not sixty men in Captain Hunt's company who served as soldiers as named in the Grant, but that a portion of them went as mariners, therefore it was ordered that these men be included. The Committee appointed to lay out this land having reported, Jan. 19, 1736, the Province Acts record

A Plat of the Township Granted to the Company Under the Command of Cap<sup>t</sup> Ephraim Hunt laid out by Nath<sup>l</sup> Kellogg Survey<sup>r</sup> & Chainmen on Oath bounded East on Dearfield West bounds on all other sides on Province Lands, Beginning at a Stake in Stones in Deerfield Westline thence Running North 22 Deg. East Two Thousand two hundred and forty perch to Deerfield River thence; West 17 Deg. North Seventeen hundred and Thirty perch then South 32 deg.; West Twenty one hundred and thirty perch then East 22 deg. South Seventeen hundred perch to the first Station.



Read and

*Ordered* that the plat be Accepted and the Lands therein delineated and described be and hereby are confirmed to the officers and soldiers of the Company in the Canada Expedition Anno 1690 under the Command of the late Captain Ephraim Hunt deceased, and to the Heirs, legal Representatives and Descendants of such of them as are Since deceased and to their Heirs & assigns respectively for Ever, they fulfilling and performing the Conditions of the Grant, provided the plat exceeds not the quantity of Six Miles square of Land, and does not interfere with any former Grant.

This survey as recorded, must have begun somewhere near the present Conway line south of where George Chapin now lives then running northerly on the course designated to the Deerfield River to a point probably a mile and a half or so below Shelburne Falls, then going westerly as described, would take in a large share of the present town of Buckland. This survey must have been made in a very careless manner, or there was some mistake in copying the minutes, as by the survey the last line could not reach the starting point by several hundred rods. It will be seen later that there was destined to be a good deal of trouble over this imperfect survey. The survey recorded in the Proprietors' Book is much worse, as there the minutes read, "Beginning on Deerfield west line thence North 32 degrees east 2240 rods to Deerfield river, then west 17 degrees north 1730 rods, then south 82 degrees west 2130 rods then east 22 degrees south 1700 rods to where we begun." The last line would not reach the starting point by several miles.

The record of the first meeting at Weymouth reads in part: "A Proprietors Meeting of the Officers and Soldiers under the Command of Capt. Ephraim Hunt of Weymouth, Deceased, that were In the Expedition to Canada in the year 1690, viz., of them or their Legal Representatives &c. A Township laid out by Order of the General Court, (Bounding) on Deerfield West Line.

"Upon the thirteenth day of March Anno, Seventeen hundred and thirty eight."

The same day it was put to "Vote Whether the First Lots Laid Out in Said Township Should at the Least be Fifty Acres, and

on the Account of badness of Land the Said Lots Should Extend to the Number of Sixty Five Acres According to the Goodness or Meanness of the Land in the opinion of the Committee that shall be appointed to Lay out the Same and it passed in the Affirmative."

Five men were chosen to lay out "Said Lots and Highways," Capt. John Phillips, Capt. Adam Cushing, James Mears, Mr. Ephraim Keith and Daniel Owen. It appears that some of the committee at least attended to their duties in person for the well authenticated story comes down to us that in these early days a surveyor by the name of Owen became lost in the woods and spent the night on a mountain, hence the name Mt. Owen.

The Committee was also "Empowered to Endeavor the Settlement of the Line Between the Township and Deerfield, Said Committee to have twelve Shillings a day for their services."

The Committee was "Empowered to Lay out so much Land for to Set or Build a Meeting House on, for a burying Place and for a Training Field as they shall think Proper."

No other meeting is recorded until a year after, April, 1739, in Weymouth it was "Voted that Any three of the Com<sup>tee</sup> be a Quorum to Act in the Settlement of the Line Betwixt the Township and Deerfield, also that a Major Part of the Committee be a Quorum to lay out the First Lots and Ways to their best Discretion. Voted That the Prop<sup>rs</sup> Meetings for the Time to Come (Until the Pro<sup>rs</sup> see Cause to Alter it) be at Mr. John Hobarts in Braintree and that Meetings be Called by putting Notifications in public print and by posting up Notifications in Weymouth Braintree & Stoughton."

It will be remembered that in 1690 Captain Hunt's company was raised in Weymouth and vicinity, and at the date of this meeting—nearly fifty years after, most of the descendants of this company were probably living in that section. A notice was posted June 23, for a meeting to be held July 24, 1739. This gave one month's notice of the meeting at which a large amount of definite business was done. It was "Voted that the Twenty Fourth Lot be for the first Minister, the Fifty first for the Ministry and the Fifty Fourth for the School." The dispute

on the Deerfield line coming up again, it was voted that the Proprietors be at the charge of Defending any part of the Township that may be controverted.

It was voted that "if Any Person Dislike his first Lot Laid out in the Plan Described he Shall Have Liberty Within Twelve Month's Time from this Day at his Own Cost and Charge to Lay Out Fifty Acres of Land in Any of the Undivided Lands in proper form and Not farther distant from the Meeting House Lot than farthest Lot already Laid Out." The Committee that laid out the Lots brought in their account for time and expenses in laying out the same, amounting to one hundred and thirty pounds, sixteen shillings and eleven pence which was Allowed and Accepted. "Voted that Mr. Nathaniel Kellogg be appointed at the Cost of the Proprietors to Clear a Way to the Township. Voted that there be thirty Pounds paid in Equal Proportions by the Propriety to the first man that shall build a Sawmill in Said Township Within One Year, And Saw for the Proprietors for Twenty Shillings per Thousand for Seven years After Said Mill is built."

The Proprietors then proceeded to draw the lots that had been surveyed and laid out by the Committee named. This first division of lots was laid out mostly in the northeasterly part of the town extending northerly to No Town or what is now Buckland line, easterly to near what is now Conway line, southerly about one-half mile from what is now the village, and the lot farthest west extending westerly from where Allison Howes now lives. The plat selected was quite irregular, some of the lots projecting much farther than others on the same side. These lots were of fifty acres each, mostly laid out one hundred and sixty rods long and fifty rods wide, a few irregular, and some gores left between lots. As an illustration of the manner in which the lots were laid out we give a description of Lot No. 1 as recorded. "The Northwest Corner is a Stack which stands about 23 Rods South of Bare River where there is a Beaver Meadow then so called on Said River from Which it Runs South 20 Dg<sup>s</sup> West 160 Rods, Thence East 20 Dg<sup>s</sup> South 50 Rods, Thence North 20 Dg<sup>s</sup> East 160 Rods, Thence

West 20 Dg<sup>s</sup> North Fifty Rods and Closed; contains Fifty Acres, Bounds West on No. 2, East on No. 7, North and South on highways of four Rods Wide Each."

This lot now would begin near the Center of the mowing lot of Wm. H. Gray's "Beaver Meadow farm," then the line would run southerly a few rods east of the Gray's buildings as designated to a point near the old Squire Phillips cellar hole just north of the road some one hundred rods east of the house of Harry Eldredge, then easterly fifty rods over Bellows hill to a point, then northerly as described, the 160 rods line passing a few rods westerly of the Factory Bridge to a point on an old wall between the farms of Wm. H. Gray and George B. Church. The main street of the village running westerly passes through the southerly portion of what were the lots 18, 17 and 51.

The Proprietors were now about to draw for each one his share of the grant which the colony, poor in money, but rich in wild lands, had given as a recompense for the services of their ancestors. Its value was doubtful, but few if any of the grantees had ever seen it. It was more than a hundred miles away, an unbroken forest, almost inaccessible by reason of poor roads and no roads, and liable to be infested by hostile Indians. Each of the Proprietors was to draw not only the 50 acre lot, but with it one sixtieth part of the whole township, or about 370 acres. The drawing was as follows:

At a Proprietors Meeting July 24 Seventeen hundred & thirty nine (after some votes were past)

Then ye Proprietors Proceeded to Draw their first Lots

1739 July 24	A List or Record of ye first Lots of ye Original		
Viz their Legal	Proprietors of ye Township granted to ye Officers		
Descendents or	& Soldiers under ye Command of Capt. Ephraim		
Representatives	Hunt of Weymouth in ye Canada Expedition in		
that Entered alfa	the year 1690 viz to them or their legal Repre-		
thofe that Drew	sentatives or Descendants &c west of Deerfield		
by Virtue thereof	As Each one drew his first Lot in whose Right		
	as appears by the List &c—viz ye former Clerks		
	& Mr. Cushings one of ye Courts Committee		

This Collum	1 Lt. John Hunt of &c	} viz. Ephraim Hunt	No.
Sheweth ye	in his Fathers Right		38
Order of	2 Dea. Thomas White	} viz Ebenezer White	20
Draughts	in his Fathers Right		

And ye Last Collum at ye Right Hand Showeth the Number of ye Lot drawn Against Each Mans Name	3	En <sup>n</sup> Nathaniel Wales In his Fathers Right	} viz Nathaniel Wales	16
	4	Benjamin Ludden In his Fathers Right		19
	5	Gideon Turrel In his Fathers Right	} viz Gideon Turrels	43
	6	Richard Faxon In his Fathers Right		59
	7	Lt. William Crane in his Fathers Right	} viz Henry Crames	15
	8	Capt Ebenezer Hunt (?) In ye Right of Joseph Nash viz in Jacobs		2
Viz ye Draughts or Order of Drawings &c As 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, &c	9	The Revd Mr Joseph Belcher ( <i>sic</i> ) For viz in his uncle Wm Right		23
	10	Jonathan Webb for Hew Baly in ye Right of Saml Baly	}	21
	11	Seth Chapin		25
	12	Capt John Phillips for Richard Phillips		13
	13	John Herrick viz Capt Benja Loring for his Uncle Jonathan Buckle	}	62
	14	Capt John Phillips in his own Right		6
Viz who Draw first & so along	15	Zachariah Brigs In his Fathers Right viz Clement		53
	16	Capt Ebenezer Hunt for ye Revd Mr Richard Pierce	}	30
		In Jonø Kings Right by Sam <sup>ll</sup>		
	17	Job Otis In ye Right of James Otis		10
	18	Jonath <sup>n</sup> Daws in his Fathers Right viz Sam <sup>ll</sup>		30
	19	Heb <sup>r</sup> for Josiah Prat in his Fathers Right viz Sam <sup>ll</sup>		1
	20	Richard DavnPort in his own Right		45
	21	Capt Ezra Whitmarsh in his Brothers Right viz John		5
	22	Solomon Leonard in his Fathers Right viz Jacob		26
	23	James Mears) for Samuel Hollis in his Fathers Right viz Thomas	}	27
	24	Joseph Good viz for Sam <sup>ll</sup> Bedlow In his Fathers Right Vizt		4
	25	Thomas Bolter in his Fathers Right viz Thomas		14
	26	Ephraim Emmerson in his Fathers Right viz Ephraim viz The Revd Mr Baly & James Mears in his		52
	27	Benjamin Beal in his own		29
	28	Barnebas Dayly viz Capt Benja Lorring for his uncle Solomon Buckle	}	22
	29	John Miller viz Capt Benja Lorring for his uncle Benjamin Buckle		28
	30	Josiah Owin in his		48
	31	Sam <sup>i</sup> Thayer in his Fathers Right viz Sam <sup>ll</sup> viz The Revd Mr Baly in his		12
	32	Ephraim viz Thomas Copeland in his Right		8
	33	James Hayward in his viz Wm		34
	34	Sam <sup>ll</sup> Gay for his Father John Poole		61

35	Ebenezer Staples	31
	for Isaac Staples viz in his	
36	Sam <sup>l</sup> Staples in his Fathers Right viz John	36
37	John King for his uncle viz in his	58
38	Mr Sam <sup>l</sup> Niles for Caleb Littlefield viz in his	
	Right	11
39	James Mears for John Chine viz in his	46
40	James Mears for Sam <sup>l</sup> Nightingal in ye Right	
	of his	42
41	Moses Penniman in ye Right of his Uncle	
	Joseph	44
42	Joshua Phillips For his Father Joshua viz in his	
	Joseph	56
43	William Linfield in his Father Wm viz in his	33
44	Mr Sam <sup>l</sup> Niles Junr for Ebenezer Vinson in his	
	Father Joseph Drakes Right	9
45	Ebenezer Owen viz Daniel Owen in his Right	40
46	Sam <sup>l</sup> Darby in his Fathers Right viz Edward	3
47	Jonathan Webb for Nathaniel Blancher viz in	
	his Right	41
48	John Bass for his Brother viz Samuel K	47
49	for Joseph Keith Prat viz in his Right	18
50	J. French for John Weld viz in his Right	37
51	Amos Stulson for Isaac Thayer viz in his Right	51
52	Joseph Drake for Wm Drake viz in his Right	60
53	Thomas Wells For his Uncle Wm viz in his	
	Right	39
54	Sam <sup>l</sup> Andrews for his Father Sam <sup>l</sup> viz in his	
	Right	57
55	John White for Perigrine White viz in his &c	35
56	Benja Stuart for James viz in his Right	63
57	Joseph Vickery in his own Right	49
58	Joseph Lobdle for his Father Josiph viz in his	32
59	Joseph Milton for his Father viz in his Right	50
60	John Bartlet for his Father John viz in his	
	Right	7

A true copy of ye Original Propriet-r  
as Recorded in ye Proprietors Book of  
Recor—Test Jacob Sherwin Prop<sup>rs</sup> Clerk

Rev. Dr. Shepard says that it does not appear from the records that any of the proprietors ever settled on the land in person. The list of those drawing lots shows that at the nineteenth drawing, "Heber" for Josiah Pratt drew lot No. 1. This Heber was a black man and settled on lot No. 1. The location of his cabin can still be seen near a spring in the pasture of Levant F. Gray. Joseph Vickery or Victory drew No. 49 and a number of years after John Victory, probably his son, lived on No. 10, the lot adjoining. Victory sold this lot with house and barn in 1761. No. 49 was where Richard Ellis the



first settler lived, now owned by Will Lanfair and No. 10 was across the road to the west. Capt. John Phillips drew No. 6 in his own right and No. 13 for Richard. Capt. John was an old man at this time, but his son Thomas, then 32 years old, settled in the new township. Richard Ellis married the daughter of Capt. John and settled there a short time previous. Lot No. 6, drawn by Capt. John, was owned by his descendants over one hundred years. Some of the descendants of Richard and Joshua also came here. The Phillipses now in this section are descendants of Capt. John by Thomas.

Those who came here did not often settle on the lots drawn by their relatives. Probably some made trips to the place and if they liked other lots better than their own they could easily be bought. Wild lands in the west of the province sold at a low price. In 1737 what is now the town of Colrain—then Boston No. 2—was sold for £1320 or about 19 cents an acre. Twenty years later by order of the General Court, ten townships were sold at auction. Among them Hawley sold for £875, Rowe, £380, and other towns accordingly. The previous records have shown that the Proprietors had already paid out considerable sums for laying out lots and other expenses for the payment of which each share was responsible. Under these circumstances the property could not have been valued very highly, and most of the proprietors were probably glad to barter their right for a comparatively small sum, sometimes without the formality of giving a deed. The few, however, who had the hardihood and enterprise to brave the perils of the wilderness, and who like other western pioneers persevered to the end, extended the borders of civilization and made for themselves and their posterity pleasant homes.

It was no easy journey for the owners of the new lands in the western wilds to visit their new possessions. It must be made from Braintree and that section either on horseback or on foot. Their route lay on the Old Bay Path from Boston to Springfield as far as Brookfield, where to shorten the distance they probably took the trail from there to Hadley, crossed on the ferry to Hatfield, came up the path to Deerfield, then by blazed trees

followed the trail previously made by Nathaniel Kellogg, the surveyor, and others up through what is now Conway to the new township. Save for a few small grassy meadows they found an unbroken forest, no sounds heard after nightfall but the cries of wild beasts. The streams were much larger than now and the land in the valleys more moist, so that the prospective settlers looked for places on sandy lands, and on the sides of the hills.

They found but few, if any, traces of Indians. It is very doubtful if the Indians ever had local habitations in this section as they did in Deerfield and other places on the Connecticut River, although they sometimes came up and had camps here for hunting, fishing, trapping and other purposes. The Indians were not as numerous as many suppose. Good authorities place the whole number in New England at less than thirty-five thousand, or not as many in number as our own county now contains and in the whole United States east of the Mississippi river, at only two hundred and fifty thousand, not half the present population of Boston. It was only in the time of the French wars when the French and their Indian allies came down from the north or over from the west that there was danger from the Indians. But the isolation and loneliness of the region can only be imagined. West of them towards Albany there were only two or three small settlements of a few inhabitants, and the only way of reaching them from the Connecticut Valley was by an Indian trail up the Deerfield Valley and over the Hoosac Mountains, or by a rough path from Westfield through Blandford westward to Stockbridge.

In the dense forest it must have been very difficult for parties to find the lots they were in search of. As a matter of fact they did in some cases make their location three-fourths of a mile from the lot assigned them. Of course, different proprietors would return to the East with different views, but the proprietors were evidently not discouraged by the reports as a whole, for at the meeting in Braintree vigorous votes were passed in aid of immediate settlement. May 28, 1741, it was "voted

that there shall be £5 paid to each of the ten Proprietors who shall first build a House and bring to Six Acres of land."

They seemed to feel deeply the need of a sawmill for they vote "That £120 be assessed as an encouragement to build a Saw Mill." At the next meeting, three months later, it seems that the spirit was more for economy for they vote "not to allow anything more to the first settlers" also "That those who build a saw mill do not have liberty to draw anything from the treasury and to do nothing farther in the matter of a corn mill."

On September 2, 1742, the meeting was held in Hadley and a new set of men appear. Nathaniel Kellogg of Hadley was a noted surveyor and was the first employed about Huntstown. The Hadley historian says of him "He was a skillful surveyor but poor in spelling." He was a prominent man in Hadley and had evidently interested the people there in the new township.

The May previous Chileab Smith of Hadley bought of John Phillips of Easton, lot No. 13 with one sixty-third part of the remaining township. It was "voted that Mr. Chileab Smith, Nathaniel Kellogg and Richard Ellis be chosen a committee to repair the road already laid from Hatfield to Deerfield, to extend the said road so far into the Township as the said Committee shall think proper at present, also to clear a way from said Township to as may be most convenient, if they think proper."

The idea of having a sawmill built at once seems to have been given up, but it was very desirable to have boards for the settlers' houses. It was therefore voted that a good whip saw be procured at the expense of the proprietors. Samuel White and Job Porter were to have said saw delivered to them by the proprietors, and to saw boards for Four pounds per thousand. These whip saws had been in use in the new settlements before they were able to build a saw mill. It was used in what was called a saw pit and was run by two men, one above, the other below. The log was first hewed out or squared like a stick of timber, then rolled over the pit for the sawyers. Two good sawyers could saw a hundred feet a day. Of course, the outside boards or planks would be hewed on one side. Carpenters

relate that in tearing down old buildings they find such boards or plank. They were found in an old house taken down by Mr. Daniel Hall about thirty-five years ago.

September 2, 1742, the first meeting of the Proprietors was held in Hadley. Nathaniel Kellogg, the surveyor, had evidently awakened interest in the new township, for Chileab Smith and others from Hadley had already bought lots there, and Richard Ellis and Thomas Phillips had moved from Easton to Deerfield evidently for the purpose of being near their possessions. Richard Ellis and the Phillipses had previously bought lots here, all of which were in Baptist Corner or Beldingville. Dr. Ellis, in the Ellis genealogy gives the first actual settlement by Richard Ellis as in 1745. Dr. Shepard also says that the first permanent settlement was made that year. But there is much evidence to show that the settlers were active here several years before that time, probably clearing up the land and building log houses. From the Proprietors' records the corn mill on Pond Brook was built in 1743, and in April, 1743, a vote was taken to give orders on the Treasurer to pay the minister who had already preached there. It is probable that the settlers were here during a part of the year while their families remained in Deerfield and Hadley. The descendants of Thomas Phillips relate how their ancestor used to come up from Deerfield in the spring to make maple sugar with a five pail iron kettle, an axe and a week's provisions on his back.

Richard Ellis probably moved his family from Deerfield up into his log house which stood a few rods east of where Will Lanfair now lives, in the spring of 1745, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Phillips, moved into his cabin soon after. The remains of this can now be seen with the well near by in the northeast part of the pasture now owned by Mr. Jerome Kendrick. Chileab Smith of Hadley bought land here as early as 1741 and other lots soon after but his name appears on the Hadley records as one of the Selectmen until 1747, showing that he did not actually settle here until that year. He was, however, on committees with Mr. Ellis and Mr. Phillips which must have taken much of his time here. Chileab settled about twenty rods

northerly from where Asa Wait now lives. The Phillips genealogy records that Phillip Phillips, son of Thomas, was born in Ashfield in February, 1738; this must be a mistake as this date was before the division of lands was made.

Other families moved in soon after. The people of Stafford, Conn., evidently were interested in the new township, for Daniel Alden and his son, Barnabas, from that town, early bought lands here, also the Standishes who settled where Frank Bailey now lives; still later the Lillies and Fosters from the same place. More Phillipses came from Easton, John and Samuel Nightingale came from Braintree and settled on Bellows Hill. Ebenezer Belding from Hatfield was here at an early date, living where Mr. Joshua Hall lived, also near the present residence of Charles Hocum. Heber Honestman and wife, negroes, who came up with Thomas Phillips lived on lot No. 1, in the upper part of what is now Mr. Levant Gray's pasture. It is said in the "History of the Town of Easton" that Heber was formerly a slave but was given his freedom by his master. Heber joined the church in Ashfield in 1763. In some of the old deeds he is called Heber Negro. There is a book in the show case in the library room of Field Memorial Hall which was owned by Heber, carried West by some of the Phillips family, and some years since through Mr. Moses Cook was presented to the library.

David Alden, whose father according to the Alden genealogy was cousin to Daniel, early settled on the farm where Jerome Kendrick now lives, his house being on the sandy knoll some forty rods west of the present dwelling. David was the father of John and the ancestor of a numerous posterity in this vicinity. These Aldens were the fifth in descent from John Alden of the Mayflower. It was a singular coincidence that John Alden and Myles Standish were frequently named in the early records, both living here at the same time and there were several Priscillas. A descendant of the Alden family a few years since on being presented with twin boys, named them respectively, John Alden and Myles Standish.

The Proprietors now began to be more in earnest in the matter of a sawmill, and at a meeting in Hadley, April 12, 1753, it was

voted to Grant to Nathaniel and William Church, two Hadley men, a set of sawmill irons, sixteen acres of land on the north side of Bear River, with certain rights and privileges, if they would build a sawmill there within six months. It does not appear whether the Churches built the mill, but it was really built that season for the next season May 29, 1754, at a meeting in Huntstown it was "Voted that all the rights and privileges of the sawmill already built and the sixteen acres of land be confirmed one-half to Chileab Smith, one-fourth to Eliphalet Cary of Bridgewater, and one-fourth to Daniel Alden of Huntstown their heirs and assigns forever." This mill was built just below the present bridge over Bear River, on the road south from the house of Church and Broadhurst, where the foundation can still be seen, also the remains of the corn mill built some rods below. Dr. Shepard's sketch and the Connecticut Valley History record that the first sawmill was built near Factory Bridge east of Mr. Levant Gray's house. This is an error. By the Proprietors' records it is clear that it was built as above stated, just below Bear River Bridge.]



## CHAPTER II

### PROGRESS—INDIANS—WHY ASHFIELD?

The number of families in 1754 as given by Dr. Shepard is eleven, and the number of inhabitants one hundred. There were probably some eight or ten log cabins scattered over what is now Baptist Corner and Beldingville, and Richard Ellis had built a new frame house. The sawmill had just been built, and the corn mill was in operation on Pond Brook. A road from Deerfield had been cut through and had been laid out by the Court of Sessions to the top of "Meeting House Hill"—Bellows Hill. They had voted £26 for preaching and £50 for building the meetinghouse. Chileab Smith had already organized his family Baptist Church, and the Proprietors were about to lay out another division of one hundred acre lots. The little colony seemed to be in a prosperous condition when the French and Indian war again broke out in 1754.

In the forenoon of June 11, 1755, a party of Indians descended upon Charlemont where a few settlers were at work in the meadow in front of where the village now is, killed two men and carried off two prisoners. The inhabitants in the settlement quickly fled to the fort, and the remaining man in the meadow eluded the Indians and made quick time to Taylor fort in what is now known as East Charlemont. The good settlers in their time of trouble remembered their neighbors in Huntstown and at once dispatched a messenger to notify the settlers there of the proximity of the Indians. Where he crossed the Deerfield River, or by what route he traversed the forest of what is now Buckland, we know not, but he arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon. Dr. Shepard's sketch tells us of the hurried consultation, the gathering together of movable stores, concealing such as they could not carry, and the hasty flight to Deerfield that night. The French war was now fully opened and the fierce Indian allies were liable to pour in upon them at any time. That they were already on the war path, the messenger brought

good evidence. Forts had been built for the protection of the settlers in Charlemont and Colrain but the Huntstown settlers being a little aside from the main track towards the west had deferred building a fort and were therefore without means of defense. Corporal Clapp of East Hadley who was sent to Huntstown in 1754 with ten men reported that they found no fort there, but "we Garded the Inhabitance til we had a Desmishion from them." Although it is not known that any Indians visited the settlement that summer, in view of the situation the settlers were justified in quickly taking their departure for Deerfield. It must have been a strange sight as the hundred people, men, women and children, wended their way through the forest, and asked admission to the Deerfield homes in the night. Some of them had relatives and acquaintances in Deerfield, others were strangers. Probably the Smiths, the next morning, journeyed on to their relatives in Hadley.

It will be noticed that Dr. Shepard and the Connecticut Valley History give this date as 1754, but from the best authorities the Charlemont raid happened one year later, and other records show fully that the settlers left in 1755. There are different accounts as to the length of time the settlers were absent from the settlement. Dr. Shepard and the Connecticut Valley History place it as probably two or three years. It is clear that the settlers left June 11, 1755. As quoted by Mr. Sheldon in his History of Deerfield, Col. Williams, commander of the military forces in this section, wrote to Governor Shirley under date of March 27, 1756:

Huntstown people quitted their place last summer for want of protection but several families returned and lived there through the winter and others will join them if they can have help. Encouraged by what they heard from you by their messenger they have begun to fortifie and in a few days will have a garrison completed. Before the war they had fitted a large area of land for tillage and raised considerable provisions. That is gone and they know not where to look for their bread, or what method to take for their support and unless something can be done for them, they must again leave the place. With a guard of ten or twelve men they think they may work upon their land with tolerable safety.

But when summer came the inhabitants did not seem to stand in so much fear of the Indians but that they thought of marrying and giving in marriage. Mr. Sheldon calls it the "first Fourth of July celebration in Huntstown when Ebenezer Smith with Remember Ellis on a pillion behind him, with his father, Chileab, riding in front as a body guard, rode through the wilderness to Deerfield, where the two former were united in marriage by Parson Ashley." Mr. Ellis gives the date as July 1, 1756. This was the first Ashfield marriage. Ebenezer, son of Chileab, was twenty-two, and his bride, daughter of Richard, was twenty-one.

The following petition was copied from the original in the old Archives at the State House, showing their anxiety for a Guard.

Huntstown March the 3 1756

To his Exolency William Sheirley Esq. Governor in and over his Magistyes Province of The Msechusets bay in New england and to the Great and General court seting at boston we the subscribers being inhabitance of Hunts town so called and your faithfull and lawyal subjects do Pray for your help under our destresst for circumstances on account of the war we would inform you we came and settled our land according to your command and have gone through great hard ship before the war by reason of the new inhabitance not coming but sence the war we think it is enough to exect the hardest have to hear but a hint of our distresses how we have heard once and again that the enemy was near upon us even within a few hours travel which after words we found to be really over then had we faint to flee for our lives (for want of the common defence allowed to other fronteers) with our wives and children leiveing our hooses as they were casting our household stoof some of it into the weeds and bushes to hide from the enemy and so to go to sojourn wher we could find a Place and thus have been scattered husbands from there wives and children from there Parance in this our great distress we went many times to The Hon Con Israel William as our father for Protection but he not being willing to put the county to charg asourded us no help save that he sent a gard of about ten men a few days to help us gather part of our crop one time thus have we been for near Two years our women and children the most of the time scattered amongst strangers we that were men many of us after going or sending to Mr. Williams for help and could git none was

forced to come to worck on our Lands without a gard save what we made among ourselves one of us spending a considerable time in the woods of hunts town to see if he could see or track the enemy. We therefore in great destress do Pray his Exolency and your Honers as our fathers to take some pittty on us for we flee to you as the last human help we have to go to and grant us some Protection as you in your wisdom shall think fit and in so doing you will most Oblige your humble and faithfull subjects.

Richard Ellis  
Hebor Honestman

Chileab Smith  
John Nightingale  
Ebenczer Smith

Heare is



hatfield

*Northwest about 18 miles is Hunts town*

Here is



dearfeild

*west about eight miles is Hunts town*

Hunts Town July The 3th 1756

To His Exolency William Sheirley Esqi governor in and over his magistyes Province of the macichusits bay in new ingland and his Honnorable counsell and to the great and jenoral Court that we trust wil shortly seet at booston we the subscribours inhabittance of Hunts Town being your faitfull and now gratly destressed subjects do Pray you would have som marcy on us and help us in oor distresse we would inform you that notwithstanding we had such incourrigment from the govonnor and Counsell and some of the settlers that new our distresses that the request we made to you the last spring for help should be

answered the cort being brooken up before our Petition was brought the govenor called a Counsel on our behalf and sent their advice to the Hon Col Williams to send us Present help yet we have had no help we would in form you we settled here in Hunts Town in obedience to your commans and are nesosarily imployed in defence of our country ourselves our wives and children our Practis a great Prat of the time sence the wor and episally this sommor hath been to scoute from Hunts Town to deirfeild este and west sometimes to clessons river or nere it and both pretty well on to deirfeild river and sometimes holly (wholly) shut up in the fort save one or too men to scout Sometimes we work all together and gard ourselves and those we are a gard to hatfeild and dearfeild and their viliges to wit a Place called roeing brook and a Place called the scars (?) and a Place called moody brook and also the Place called the bars and wopin (Wapping) all which Places we are a specil gard unto and some defince to others also by which means we are grately impovereshed many of us that ware inhabitance are alreedy broken up and in want of soport by which we are weakened and the Town in utmost danger it being given up to the will of our enemies we pray therefore that you would have some bowels of pittye upon us your distressed subjects and send us some strenth of men and put us under the common Pay of the garoson service of this Provence from last March and forwards until our services shall end we Pray for this your pity and help in grate distress and so we remain your faithful and lawal subjects

Chileab Smith

Ebenezer Smith

Chileab Smith Jr

Reuben Ellis

Moses Smith

Heber Honestman

Richard Ellis

Mathew Ellis

John Ellis

To his exolency the governor and his Honorable Counsel and The great and Jenoral Cort We the subscribors belonging to the neighboring Towns of Huntstown and being Sensoble in some mesore of the destressed condition of the people of Hunts Town and the great importance of haveing Them incoridged and soported in their Town They being situate in the front tear of Dearfeild Hatfeild and Hunts town and their scattoring veligae which are very deserving on account of the indends and answer their request which we think evidently reasonable to all that are aquented with their destreesed surcomstances and their hard service in defence of themselves and Their contry which hath yet bin don upon their one cost without any reward from their contry

Note that Chileab Smith son and John Elis are not yet quite of age but are good soldyers able bodyed every way able to do the work of solders and have don it this sommor being expert with guns beyend som that are of full age.

The Persons that now live in Huntstown are Twenty nine in number. The Persons that are scattered away from Huntstown for want of Protection are 54. The whole number is eighty Three.

Note. that Three of the subscribers do not now live in Hunts-Town by reason of the war but Thare are others that have not had opertunity to get thare hands to this paper that we have reson to think want protection as much as we.

Thomas Phillips  
Moses Smith  
Wetherel Wittium  
Reuben Ellis  
Mathew Ellis  
Richard Phillips  
Moses Smith ivn. (jun.)

In the House of Rep. July 8, 1756

Read and Noted, That his Hon. the Lieut. Gov. be desired to give direction to Col. Israel Williams that he order a suitable number of Forces destined to Scout on the Western Frontier for ye Protection of the Petitioners and Inhabitants of sd. Place as he shall Judge necessary.

Sent up for concurrence

T. Hubbard Spkr.

It does not appear that anything definite was done in answer to the petition until April 7, 1757, when a Resolve of the Court directs among other fort assignments that "ten men and no more including one sergeant" be sent to Huntstown, the pay to be four shillings a week and forty pounds paid for every Indian scalp.

Lieut. John Hawks of Deerfield was under Colonel Williams in command of the outlying forts north and west of Deerfield. He kept a diary of his doings and reports, which has been preserved by his descendant Frederick E. Hawks of Greenfield and presented by him to the P. V. M. A., at Deerfield. In this Colonel Hawks says under date of April 19, "In ye afternoon enlisted soldiers for the frontier and staid at Deerfield enlisting and



stationing, 14 for Northfield, 14 for Greenfield, 14 for Colrain, 8 for Falltown, 4 for Charlemont, 3 for Huntstown, and on the 13th of May went to Huntstown to see where the fort should be."

As both the forts in Huntstown had been built, Colonel Hawks' errand probably was to decide at which fort the men should be stationed.

July 8, Colonel Williams received an order to send a guard of nine men to Huntstown. They were sent under command of Sergeant Allen. The fort had already been built that season, and is well described by Dr. Shepard. It stood about twenty rods north of the house where Mr. Asa Wait now lives, and included Mr. Chileab Smith's house which stood just east of the present highway and extended easterly to the low ground to include the spring. A guard was probably here until the close of the war in 1759. Nathan Chapin, one of this guard, improved his time and opportunity by marrying Mary Smith, daughter of Chileab. He was the ancestor of the present Chapins in town, a Revolutionary soldier, and will be further noticed.

Another smaller fort was built, half a mile south, for the protection of the Phillips and Ellis families and others. A lady now living in this town remembers hearing her great grandmother relate how the family used to go down and spend the night at the fort for greater security from the Indians. The site of this fort with the well near it may still be seen in the pasture south of Church and Broadhurst's. The records of the old Baptist Church for 1756 say, "They continued in the town and kept up the Publick Worship of God on the first day of the week continually."

By the foregoing dates it will be seen that the settlers were really absent but a few months. About the time the guard was sent to Huntstown, guards were also stationed at the two forts in Charlemont and at two forts in Colrain. Scouts were also continually scouring the woods westward, and any sign of the enemy was quickly reported to the settlements, and with all these precautions the inhabitants felt a sense of partial security. At any rate, work in the settlement went on and some Proprietors' meetings were held during the war.

September 10, 1760, a Proprietors' meeting was held at the house of Mr. John Victory in Huntstown, at which it was voted to purchase a law book for the use of the inhabitants and to hold the future meetings at Huntstown, Ephraim Marble, Clerk. Previous to this, only one meeting had been held here; that in 1754 with Daniel Alden for Moderator. The meetings had usually been held in Hadley or Hatfield. The next meeting was held at the house of Ebenezer Belding, when it was "voted to have a suit with Deerfield if it be necessary." March 25, 1761, at house of Thomas Phillips "Voted to rase a tax of thirty shillings on each Right for laying out and mending roads," also, "Voted to procure a Bull for the use of the Inhabitants, and that Moses Smith provide and keep a Boar." Also "to raise six pence on each right to purchase a law book and that Nathan Chapin be a committee to effect the same."

About this time it is recorded that there were nineteen families here. The next meeting was held at the same place on May 20, and a committee of three men from Deerfield was chosen to say how much Chileab Smith shall be paid for sawing boards. Also voted to sue for the clerk and treasurer's books then at Hatfield. The next meeting was at the house of Richard Ellis, and it would seem that a good delegation from Hatfield was present, for Reuben Belding was chosen Clerk and Obadiah Dickinson Treasurer, both Hatfield men. Voted "That the place of holding future meetings be at the house of Zachariah Billings in Hatfield." December 9, at the last named place, it was voted "to direct Reuben Belding to require Ephraim Marble to deliver up the Proprietors book." It would seem that the Hatfield and Hadley people bought largely of the Rights in Huntstown, consequently could control more votes in a Proprietors' meeting than the actual settlers. The meetings were continued in Hatfield for three years.

In 1763 another division of lots of one hundred acres each was made, mainly in the southeasterly part of the town, the rest scattered. Lot No. 1 of this division was the School Lot and extended easterly to the banks of South River near Blakesley's

Mill to Deerfield Line; Deerfield claiming up to this line at that time.

It has been seen that in order to cover expenses and "bring forward the settlement," numerous assessments had been made on the rights. Many of these taxes had not been paid, therefore in 1763, a committee was chosen to sell at public "vendue" the lands held by the delinquents, sufficient to pay the taxes thereon. This was done at several times in 1763-4. This land sold at prices varying from one and a half to six shillings per acre, according to the situation. The buyers were mostly the settlers; but some land was bought by new men just coming in. Probably nearly one thousand acres were sold.

Much trouble had arisen in laying out lots on the borders of the town, because it was not certainly known just how far out Huntstown extended. In July, 1762, at a meeting in Hatfield, Obadiah Dickinson, Reuben Belden and Nathaniel Kellogg were chosen a committee to "Prefer a Plan to the Great and General Court for confirmation of the Township of Huntstown so called, and also that the Committee be directed to act further as they shall think proper." The line next to Deerfield was very uncertain and there had been trouble ever since the first settlement. In 1741, Deerfield put in to the General Court a Plan of its township which Huntstown claimed cut off several thousand acres of its lands. The fight between the two townships before the General Court continued for years, sometimes with a good deal of bitterness. On one occasion the Huntstown petitioners say that when they remonstrate with their Deerfield neighbors, all the satisfaction they get is "Clear away as fast as you can and we will come and occupy it." Mr. Sheldon says the trouble was, the river was crooked. The grant of Deerfield extended from the Connecticut River nine miles west into the woods. If the Deerfield men measured from a point in the nearest crook, they would of course carry Huntstown to the westward. The above committee presented their petition before the General Court January 25, 1763, saying that in 1741, Deerfield had put in a plan of that town which was accepted by the General Court, but which cut off several thousand acres from

Huntstown; that in 1742, Huntstown put in a petition for an Equivalent on the west, and adjoining province lands; that an Act to that effect passed the House, but by some accident did not pass the Chair. They say that the bounds of the township are unknown and ask that a Committee be appointed to define them, especially between Huntstown and Deerfield. A committee was therefore appointed and after visiting the premises, and hearing both sides, their report came up before the General Court June 18, 1765, and the vote is recorded as follows:

In the House of Representatives. A plan of the Township of Huntstown taken by Eleazer Nash, Surveyor and Chainmen on Oath, bounded as follows viz<sup>t</sup> beginning at a Maple Staddle and heap of Stones marked thus 9x which stands in Deerfield West line 420 perch from their southwest corner on the course North 19° East, and from the aforesaid Maple, runs North 19° East 2180 perch to a Hemlock tree marked 9x and a heap of Stones. Thence West 17° North 650 perch. Thence West 3° South 1615 perch to Hatfield Grant, The same being Mayhew's Northeast corner. Thence South 1050 perch. Thence East 22° South 1714 perch and closed to the first boundary. Contains 23040 acres, Surveyed August 1st, 1764, one Rod in thirty allowed for sag of chain.

Voted that the said plan be accepted, and the Lands therein delineated and described be Confirmed to the proprietors of the said Hunts Town their Heirs and Assigns.

This decision and Plan of the Committee placed the southeast corner of the township over a mile further south. It also moved the northeast corner the same direction and distance. It moved the line between Deerfield and Huntstown over one hundred rods to the east, taking so much of what Deerfield had claimed. These corners, also the north line of the town, were probably the same as at present. Some of the lots before this were laid over into No Town (Buckland) and had to be "removed" afterwards. If subsequent measurements were correct on the north line, Mayhew's Corner was farther west than the present northwest corner. The west and south lines next to Plainfield and Goshen have been considerably changed from this Plan.

On June 19, the next day after this Plan was accepted by the General Court, the House Journal says, "A Bill for erecting a

New Plantation called Huntstown in the County of Hampshire into a town by the name of ———— was read three several times and passed to be engrossed." In the Council the next day, the bill was read the first and second times "into a town by the name of ————." The next day, June 21, the same, "incorporated into a town by the name of Ashfield," read a third time and passed to be enacted. So it seems that the name was not decided on until the very last stages of the bill, quite probably it was supplied by the Governor and Council without outside suggestion.

It does not appear from the records that any petition was sent in for the incorporation of the town; it was probably brought before the General Court on the motion of some member. It appears by the record that the bill went up to the Governor and Council and to its last stage with no name for the town inserted.

During the nine years Bernard was governor, from 1761 to 1770, thirty-nine towns were incorporated, of which twenty-eight were named by him. At this time Lord Thurlow of Ashfield, England, was very prominent in England and in hearty sympathy with Governor Bernard in his feeling toward the colonies. With his penchant for naming towns, and with the opportunity given him at the last stage of the bill, there can be little doubt that Governor Bernard filled the blank with *Ashfield* in honor of his English friend. There has been much speculation as to the origin of the name of our town. A note found in Mr. Ranney's papers shows that he favored this explanation. An old history of the state, speaking of this town, says it was named after Lord Thurlow of Ashfield.

An Act for Erecting The New Plantation called Huntstown, in the County of Hampshire, into a Town by the name of Ashfield.

Whereas it hath been represented to this court that the erecting the plantation called Huntstown into a town, will greatly contribute to the growth thereof and remedy many inconveniences to which the inhabitants and proprietors may be otherwise subjected,—Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and House of Representatives,

[Section 1] That the plantation aforesaid, bounded as follows;



viz<sup>t</sup>, east by Deerfield; south, partly by Narraganset Township Number Four, and partly by province land; west partly by province land, and partly by Bernard's and Mayhew's and Hatfield land; and north, by province land; more particularly described in a plan of said township, confirmed in the present session of the general court,—be and hereby is erected into a town by the name of Ashfield; and that the inhabitants thereof shall be invested with all the powers, privileges and immunities which the inhabitants of the towns within this province do enjoy.

And be it further enacted,

[Sect. 2.] That Thomas Williams Esq<sup>r</sup>., be and hereby is empowered to issue his warrant, directed to some principal inhabitant of said town, to notify and warn the inhabitants of said town, qualified by law to vote in town affairs, to meet at such time and place as shall therein be set forth, to chuse all such officers as are or shall be required by law to manage the affairs of said town.

And be it further enacted,

[Sect. 3.] That all taxes already raised for settling a minister, or that may be raised for his support, for building a meeting house, clearing and repairing roads, be levied on the several proprietors of said plantation, according to their interests, until the further order of this court; and that said inhabitants and proprietors of said town proceed by the same rules, in levying and collecting said taxes, as proprietors in new plantations are obliged by law to observe. [Passed June 21.]

At the centennial celebration in Conway in 1867, Rev. Charles Rice in his Historical Address says:

There was much controversy with Huntstown, now Ashfield, concerning the western boundary. Twice the Deerfield and Conway men got the worst of the matter in law and were compelled to draw in their lines. They never felt easily as to the way the business was settled and unquestionably we ought to believe they were wronged.

We do not see how our good Conway neighbors can lay up anything against us for this, for the old Province Laws for 1765 detail fully how a disinterested Committee appointed by the General Court thoroughly investigated the matter and made the report as recorded.



## CHAPTER III

### ROADS, MEETINGHOUSE, BAPTIST TROUBLES

As can be seen by consulting the Plan of lots, spaces were left for roads between different tiers of lots, but very often they could not be used as they were located, and had to be laid out in different places. The first record of a road laid out in Huntstown is found in the old Hampshire records at Northampton, Court of Sessions, 1754.

We met at Deerfield, began at the east path, south from the top of Long Hill, which leadeth out to the old sawmill, and in said path until it comes to the path turning out northerly, commonly called Huntstown road, and on said road as it was marked by the town of Huntstown, and now commonly traveled, until it comes unto the west side of Deerfield bounds, and from thence in the northern road unto Thomas Phillips' house in Huntstown, and from thence as the road now goes to the west side of said Phillips' lot, and from thence in a straight line to Richard Ellis' new house, from thence as the path now goes unto Meeting House hill [Bellows Hill], unto a beech tree with stones around it, near Heber's fence, the whole road to be ten rods wide.

What was laid out probably followed nearly the old road through what is now Conway to Conway village, then over Baptist Hill to the Totman and Pfersich neighborhood, then to Thomas Phillips' house at the north end of Lot No. 46—now Mr. Kendrick's pasture, then westerly to a point near the sawmill then just built near the present Bear River bridge, then south to where Mr. Lanfair now lives, then west up past where Mr. Joshua Hall now lives to the top of the hill. In the map in the Ellis book the dotted line marked 00 should go from 48 westerly to 6, instead of northwesterly to 35.

In 1761 the Proprietors laid out a road beginning where this left off at the top of the hill, then going southwesterly past the house of John Nightingale across lots Nos. 13 and 14 around the west side of Mill hill to the corn mill, thence past the house of Withere l Wittium to lot No. 18, then along No. 18 to the east

and west road laid out in the original survey which was nearly what is now the main street of the village. This road can easily be traced at present. The same day a road was laid from the sawmill on Bear River northerly, probably as far as No Town.

It will be remembered that by the conditions of the Grant, the petitioners must "Settle a Learned Orthodox Minister and build and finish a Convenient Meeting House for the Publick Worship of God." It seems that it was originally contemplated to place the meetinghouse at the north end of No. 47, next to the ministerial lot No. 24, south of where Church and Broadhurst now live, but in May, 1743, it was voted that "when built it be built on the Southing end of Lot No. 7 or Southing end of Lot No. 1," (on Bellows Hill). Then April 4, 1744, voted "that as there is great expectation of a war with France ye building of a Meeting House be suspended at present." November 12, 1753, voted to raise £50 to build a meetinghouse under charge of former Committee. May 20, 1761, voted that the committee chosen to expend the money for building the meetinghouse, and to pitch a place where to set it still be the committee for the same. December 9, 1761, voted that they will as soon as convenience will admit proceed to build a meetinghouse and that it be under the direction of a committee appointed for that purpose. Obadiah Dickenson, Nathaniel Kellogg, Reuben Belding, John Sadler, Major Fuller, Ebenezer Belding and Phillip Phillips were chosen that committee "to carry on the affair to the best advantage for the proprietors, and complete the same so far as to set it up and cover it and glas it and lay the floor. The dimensions of the house to be 35 feet in length and 45 feet in breadth." Also voted that "the former place of setting the meeting house be revoked, and that the meeting house that is to be set up in Huntstown be set up on the 13th lot, on the north end as near to the highway as convenience will admit." (A few rods south of the former location.) October 27, 1762, voted that "the Dimensions of the Meeting House be 48 feet in length and 36 in breadth." June 22, 1764, voted to raise £20 for roads if needed—remainder for materials for meetinghouse. December 11, 1765, meeting at inn of Joseph

Mitchell (east side of Bellows Hill). Voted to "raise £60 in order to go forward with building a meeting house and to go forward with building a meeting house next spring and set it up as soon as it conveniently can be." July 13, 1766, voted "not to revoke the vote to set the meeting house on the northerly end of Lot No. 13, and not to choose a new committee." During the summer of 1767 the frame of the house was erected on Bellows Hill, but there was evidently opposition to the location. New settlers were already locating in the village and to the south and west of it, and it was felt that very soon this site would be outside of the center of the increasing population. By the last section of the Act of Incorporation it will be seen that the town independently of the Proprietors was interested in the meetinghouse and on August 10, 1767, at a town meeting it was voted "not to concur with the Proprietor's vote to cover the meeting house where it stands." November 4, 1767, at the inn of Joseph Mitchell it was voted to adjourn to the house of Samuel Lillie (near the present cemetery by the village) at 8 o'clock the next morning, then adjourned back again to inn of Joseph Mitchell at 11 o'clock where it was voted

That with regard to ye meeting house, Notwithstanding the Proprietors did at their meeting ye 7 of July 1762 vote that ye meeting house be set at ye North end of ye Lot No. 13 first division, where ye frame now stands; Sd Proprietors and many of ye Inhabitants being apprehensive it does not stand in a suitable place to accommodate ye town, Voted: That they will move the Meeting House Frame to ye Northerly end of Lot No. 18, 1st Division, Viz. About forty rods from ye North end thereof where we have this day set up stakes for the front of ye house fronting ye road that leads to Capt. Fullers. Voted, To make application to Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Anable of Bernardston in pulling down the Meeting House.

There was still another attempt to obstruct this removal. In a warrant for a town meeting to be held November 12, 1767, one week after the Proprietor's final vote, was an article "To see if the town will choose a Committee and Impower them to Put a Stop to these proceedings in Puling down the Meeting House Frame til further order of the town," but it appears the

vote did not pass. The place designated for the meetinghouse and where it was subsequently set was in what is now the cemetery, the front of the building being near the burial lot of Mrs. Henry Hall.

The work, however, progressed slowly. August 17, 1768, voted "to raise £5 on each right and to choose a committee to go forward with the meeting house." February 8, 1769, voted that "the committee chosen at ye last meeting to build ye Meeting House have Power to hire ye Work done by the great."

In January, 1771, the Proprietors met at the meetinghouse the first time for a meeting.

The matter of the controversy between the Baptist and Congregational churches alluded to by Dr. Shepard is of such importance as to deserve more than a passing notice here and we can do no better than to quote largely from a paper read by Mr. Charles A. Hall before the P. V. M. A., February 26, 1907, "In regard to Chileab Smith and his fight for the rights of the Ashfield Baptists."

[In his pamphlet entitled "An answer to many slanderous reports cast on the Baptists at Ashfield, (Printed in Norwich by Robertsons and Trumbull, for the author, 1774—Reprinted by W. McKinstry, Censor Office, Fredonia, N. Y., 1865, for Quartus Smith of Stockton, N. Y., great grandson of the author)" Chileab Smith says, "My father died when I was four years old, but my mother instructed me in things of religion and taught me how to live." He passed through many heart-breaking religious experiences as he grew up but at last "was delivered out of spiritual Egypt, and the cry of my soul to the Lord was what will you have me to do?" He went and joined himself to a church in Hadley, which he says, "I found out afterwards was wofully fallen or else never was in good standing." His objection to this church was "that they did not pretend to require a person to be converted in order to join the church but take them in when under the power of a carnal mind, which the Scripture saith is enmity against God and is not subject to his law, neither can be." He went to the Association carrying his

principles in writing with him. He described first the true Church of God, and secondly the church in Hadley. "Its members not living stones but dead in trespasses and sins, so that if a person is no better than is required to be a member of their church he must perish eternally." The Association told him he was wrong, so he "went home and withdrew from that church in a public meeting. Some were for dealing with me but finally they let me alone. Not long after this I removed to Huntstown, (1750)—now called Ashfield." He found the inhabitants of Huntstown rather indifferent about religious matters. He says he was concerned about the spiritual welfare of his children, his neighbors, "and also for mankind universal." He says, "After thinking a long time about the matter I was showed the duty and obligation I was under to let the light which was lighted up in my soul shine before others and not to hide it under a bed or a bushel, which gained a resolution in my mind to declare to others if they would hear me—the truths which lay on my mind and let come what will." So he called a meeting for religious worship and "when the time came there came together almost all there were in town to hear."

This was the beginning of the Baptist Church in Ashfield, for Mr. Smith says, "We were led to see of Baptism that immersion was the mode and believers the subjects and this we practice." All his eight children were converted and many of his neighbors also. His oldest son, Ebenezer, was fond of reading the Bible and good books. His father says, "And now the knowledge he had received in his heart with the head knowledge he had received before, being sanctified by the grace of God was all improved in speaking of the kingdom of Christ publicly in our meetings. In the year 1761, my son, Ebenezer Smith, was chosen by the universal vote of the church and ordained to the pastoral care of the church and thus continues to this day." It may be said here that Ebenezer Smith's "head-knowledge" was not considered by his Congregational opponents as sufficient for "A learned Orthodox Minister."

On December 22, 1762, the Proprietors gave a call to Mr. Jacob Sherwin to settle with them in the work of the gospel



ministry. February 22, 1763, a Congregational Church consisting of fifteen members was formed by an ecclesiastical council convened for the purpose and on the following day Mr. Sherwin was by the same council, ordained pastor. The articles of faith and covenant were consented to and signed by the following persons: Jacob Sherwin, Thomas Phillips, Nathan Wait, Ebenezer Belding, Joseph Mitchell. Mr. Sherwin was born in Hebron, Connecticut, and was graduated from Yale College in 1759.

The churches were now organized and ready for trouble which began at once. Each church claimed that their minister ought to have the land set aside in the several divisions for the first minister. The Congregationalists could not claim that they were first on the ground, so they claimed that Ebenezer Smith was not a regular minister, but a kind of "hedge priest;" though the Baptist Association which met in Warren County, September 24, 1769, set the seal of regularity upon him and his society. The Congregationalists were now most numerous in town and being supported by most of the non-resident Proprietors they seized upon the ministerial lands which they never gave up. They also voted to tax all the people in town, without regard to their religious belief, for the support of the Congregational Church and for the building of the Congregational Church. Chileab Smith in his pamphlet says: "The other society ordained their minister in 1763. We endured the injustice of paying his settlement and salary and for the building their meeting house till the year 1768; then in May, the church sent a petition to the General Court in Boston for relief. They chose a committee to look into the affair and our petition appeared so reasonable to them that they blamed me for not coming sooner for help. But finally the Court passed a resolve that I should go and notify the town and proprietor's clerk with a copy of our petition to show cause if any they had, why our prayer be not granted at the next session of this court, and that further collection of taxes, so far as respected the petitioners, should be suspended in the meantime. But alas for us!! after I was gone to do the business they told me to do, at the same



sitting the General Court made an act wherein they empowered our opponents to gather money of us or sell our lands for the payment of their minister and the finishing of their meeting-house—yet I went to the Court at the day they appointed but could get no hearing.” This act passed for the benefit of the Congregational society was called “An act in addition to an act for erecting the new Plantation called Huntstown in the county of Hampshire, into a town called Ashfield.” By it the Proprietors were empowered to lay and collect such taxes as they thought necessary for the purpose of completing the Congregational meetinghouse, for the settlement and support of their minister and for the maintenance of roads; and the act provided that “the monies so raised shall be assessed upon each original right consisting of 250 acres each, every part of which, in whose-soever hands it may be, being subject to taxation.” This was an unusual law even for those days, and gave the Baptists no chance to escape taxation for the support of the Congregational Church. The great struggle of the Ashfield Baptists was to get this law repealed and no

“Village Hampden who with dauntless breast  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood”

ever showed more persistent courage than Chileab Smith in the long discouraging years when he stood up for the religious freedom of the people of Ashfield.

This law may be found in Vol. 4 of the Province Laws, Chap. 5, Page 1015. Many documents connected with the case are also printed and on page 1035, in speaking of this act it is said, “The importance of the subject which the passage of this act brought into discussion in the Province and before the Privy Council seems to warrant the printing of the following papers which though cumulative and repetitious and generally written by illiterate persons in humble life, form a significant part of the series of efforts to secure that religious liberty which today is the boast of our commonwealth.” The following is a copy of one of the many petitions sent to the General Court by the Baptists. Their Church Records say: “Under our oppression we sent 8 times to the General Court at Boston for relief, but got none.” The petition says, (Page 1036 Vol. 4, Province Laws):

An Acct. of ye sufferings of ye B'p't's in Ashfield. 1. Constituted June 27, 1761. 2. Minister ordained Aug 20, 1761 by Elder Noah Alden, Vitman Jacob, with two private brethren from Sturbridge. 3. Number of Communicants in 1769, 30. 4. Our society who have agreed in ye choice and ordination of our Elder were by far ye major part of ye inhabitants of ye town at yt time; and we were ab't building a Meeting house, but were forced to desist by reason of there coming into town a number of men of a contrary persuasion who by help of ye non-resident proprietors over powered in voting so yt they have raised large sums of money for another meeting house and have settled another minister and given him a large settlement and salary, and have built their meeting-house and altho ye General Court had granted a considerable tract of land to ye first minister yt sho be settled in this town, yet ye above party have seized upon ye land and put their minister (though not ye first) into possession of it, and we have been forced to pay at several vendues ye sum of ten pounds lawful money upon each right, chiefly for their minister and meeting house, and have since raised a tax of 150 pounds for yt use and have this year 1769 voted a tax of 507 pounds lawful money wholly for yt use and have posted our lands for sale to force us to pay our equal proportion thereof, yet not one penny allowed us for our meeting-house. Thus it appears that our oppression is very great in this regard for ye appearance of things are such at present yt we see nothing but yt our lands will be sold and we be disinherited for ye maintainance of a society to which we do not belong. For altho we have sent two petitions to ye General Court for help, as yet we have had none, thus far

Chileab Smith  
Ebenezer Smith

Their cause was also taken up by the Baptist Committee of Grievances acting in the name and by the appointment of the Baptist churches met in association in Bellington, this province, the 11th, 12th and 13th days of September, 1769. (see Province Laws Vol. 4, page 1038.)

The answer of the Proprietors is very long. I will give a few extracts from it. Speaking of the Baptist petition they say:

Your respondents are sure your excellencies and honors cannot rightly judge unless the real character and true springs of action of the people professing themselves Baptists in this part of the country, (we profess not to be acquainted with

others) are fairly laid before you, and here the truth obliges us to declare that those people with and about us who have now assumed the name of Baptists were originally Separatists, as they were vulgarly called from the established church without other name or appellation than Separatists. The causes and springs of whose separation have been such as these: to wit, with some it was an unconquerable desire of being teachers, a privilege or indulgence which could in no other wise be issued to them but by a disorderly separation from the churches to which they belong and setting up a meeting of their own. Some have left the churches and gone to these people because they have been guilty of such offences as justly exposed them to a kind of discipline to which they could not feel themselves willing to submit and some have had the effrontery to say that the standing ministry is corrupt. Ministers themselves unconverted. The churches impure and unholy. Admitting unconverted and unsanctified persons to their communion &c.

These charges it will be seen refer mostly to Chileab Smith's troubles with the church in Hadley. They also say:

In a word these meetings or churches or whatever else they may be called as well since as before they took their present denomination have been a kind of receptacle for scandalous and disorderly Christians, and may with some degree of propriety be considered as a sink for some of the filth of Christianity in this part of the country. \* \* \* Thus pride, vanity, prejudice, impurity and uncharitableness seem to have originated and also much to have supported a sect so pure that they cannot hold communion with ordinary Christians. The legislature we humbly conceive cannot with any propriety interpose in matters of religion further than to secure good and prevent ill effects of it to the state. Whenever then any religion or profession bears an ill aspect to the state it becomes a proper object of attention to the legislature. Of this kind most evidently is that religion which rejects men of learning for its teachers and altogether chooses such as are illiterate and men of ordinary ability and this is the religion of ye people we have been describing.

Of Elder Ebenezer Smith they say "That there is such a man as Ebenezer Smith is true. That this same Ebenezer Smith is a regularly ordained minister in a legal or scriptural or any other commonly received sense of ye words is as notoriously not true."

In refreshing contrast to the spirit of this paper is the following put in by the Baptists as a part of their case: "We whose

names are undersigned have no objection against the Anabaptist society being set free from paying to the maintenance of the other society which they do not belong unto." Dated Ashfield, June ye 9th 1768. Signed Jonathan Sprague Jun. Isaac Crittenden Jun. John Ellis, Simeon Wood, Nehemiah Washburn, Aaron Fuller, Zebulon Bryant, Jonathan Taylor, Azariah Selden, John Wilkie, John Briggs, Jacob Washburn.

At a time when men let their prejudice in favor of their own sect overthrow every other consideration, these men, none of whom were Baptists, were willing that other people of a different creed should have a square deal, and they ought to have credit for it. The legislative committee to which the Baptist petition and the Proprietors' answer was referred reported:

That there never was a law relating either to Churchmen, Baptists or Quakers, exempting them from paying taxes considered as Proprietors or Grantees in a new Plantation. \* \* \* The laws relative to them respect only such rates as are assessed by towns, district, or parish. Your committee finds that in the sale of these lands there was no unfairness, but every thing quite fair, quite neighborly and quite legal. Upon the whole, your committee though desirous that everything might be done that can be desired for persons of every denomination of Christians, whereby they may worship God in their own way and according to the dictates of their own consciences without any let or molestation whatsoever, yet for the reasons above mentioned and many more that might be offered it is our opinion that said petition be dismissed. W. Brattle by order.

The Council voted that the petition be dismissed. The House of Representatives non-concurred and "voted that Mr. Denny, Col. Bowers and Mr. Ingersoll of Great Barrington with such as the Hon ble board shall join to be a committee to bring in a bill repealing the act," but the Council non-concurred and the Baptist petition was denied and the Baptists were beaten in their long fight. I cannot help having a feeling of satisfaction that the House was willing to do the square thing by the Baptists. In a letter written long after, Elder Ebenezer Smith said, "This looked like a dark day, but I had this for my support that there is a God in heaven that governs the affairs of men." Elder Smith soon had reason to know that his support was sure, for

in Backus' History of the Baptists, 2nd Edition, Vol. 2, page 160, it is said that "When such a noise was made in Boston about the Ashfield affair, Gov. Hutchinson happened to look and find that the word support was not in the original grant of those lands, and perhaps he might hope that by relieving the Baptists he should draw them to his side of the controversy betwixt America and Britain. Be that as it may, he privately sent word to one of the committee and advised him to send the Ashfield law to a friend in London who might present it to the King in council, and he promised to write to Gov. Bernard, who passed it, to use his influence to have it repealed. This was done and its repeal was effected, then their oppressors had their turn of waiting upon one assembly after another unsuccessfully, for though several acts were framed for them, yet the consent of the governor could not be obtained till they found out what his mind was and conformed to it."

The friend in London to whom the Baptists turned for help was Dr. Samuel Stennett, pastor of the church in Little Wild Street. He was a Baptist minister who was in favor with George the Third. Dr. Stennett received his degree from Aberdeen University in 1763. He was the author of many hymns, among others, "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," and "Majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the Saviour's brow." His petition is in part as follows:

To the Right Hon ble the Lords Commissioners of Trade & Plantations. The humble petition of Samuel Stennett on behalf of the Baptists in Ashfield in the County of Hampshire New England sheweth that by a Grant from the General Assembly in 1765 the Plantation of Huntstown in the County of Hampshire was erected into a township by the name of Ashfield with a condition that the settlers should build a meeting place and support an Independent minister that 17 families were settled in Ashfield of which 12 being Baptists a Baptist church was immediately established there that the Independents also established a church requiring the Baptists to support *their* minister. Agreeable indeed to the terms of the grant, but contrary to a general law freeing Baptists and Quakers from taxation towards the support of other churches. That the Baptists therefore refused to pay towards the support of the Ashfield Independent



minister; that in May or June 1768, an act passed in addition to the aforesaid act of 1765 which confirmed the grievance complained of; that the Baptists still refusing to comply, their effects were distrained for payment. That they have since petitioned the Assembly for a repeal of the Ashfield law passed in 1768, and that not having obtained such repeal, your petitioner prays on behalf of said Baptists that his Majesty will graciously be pleased to disallow the said Ashfield act, and as speedily as may be judged convenient, as the time limited for the King's disallowing it is now very nearly expiring.

At the Court of St. James the 31st of July 1771, present the King's most excellent Majesty in Council"—The report of this meeting of the Council says in part: "The said Lords of the Committee did this day report as their opinion to his Majesty that the said act ought to be disallowed. His Majesty, taking the same into consideration, was pleased, with the advice of his privy Council to declare his disallowance of the said act and to order that the said act be, and it hereby is disallowed and rejected. Whereof the Governor, Lieut. Governor, or Commander in Chief of His Majesties Province of Massachusetts Bay for the time being, and all others Whom it may concern are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

So the long fight was won and the wrong done by the sectarian quarrel among a few rude farmers in the little backwoods settlement was righted by His Most Excellent Majesty sitting in Council at the splendid Court of St. James. It was a great victory, not only for Baptists but for all religious denominations in this commonwealth; for none of them should thereafter be taxed "for the maintainance of another society which they do not belong unto." Great was the joy in Baptist Corner, and great was the confusion of the opposition, for this decision of the King was entirely unexpected by them and they were overtaken and thrown down by it in the midst of their high handed career. Ebenezer Smith says that there were only three persons in America who knew that the Baptists had appealed to the King. (See letter in Ellis Book, page 342.) The records of the Baptist Church contain this extremely brief account of the matter, "In Oct. 1771, We were set at liberty by the King of Great Britain and our lands restored."]

(This entire paper may be found published in the V. Vol. of the Transactions of the P. V. M. A.)



## CHAPTER IV

### RUNNING RECORDS AND EVENTS TO 1812

February 10, 1765, Nathaniel Kellogg and others put in a Petition to the General Court that Huntstown was not able to pay the taxes levied by the Province, therefore it was ordered that a list of the Polls and Estates be taken and returned to the Court at the May Session. The tax of Huntstown was remitted for three years by a vote in June, 1765, but the valuation list given here is recorded in the town book as for 1766 instead of 1765.

The records of the first town meetings as stated by Mr. Shepard were very imperfect, being only on scraps of paper, but Mr. Ranney in 1857 copied what could be deciphered into a book for preservation. It seems by these, that before its incorporation Huntstown assumed the duties of a town. It met as a town in 1762-3-4, choosing town officers and passing other votes. Among the officers chosen were deerreeves and hogreeves and it was usually voted that "hoggs shall run from the first of April."

After the incorporation of the town agreeable to the Act, Thomas Williams of Deerfield issued a warrant to Samuel Belding to notify the Voters of Ashfield to assemble at the house of Joseph Mitchell, innholder, the 6th day of January, 1766, to elect necessary officers, etc. This was for Ashfield's first legal town meeting and this is the list of officers recorded as elected: Samuel Belding, Timothy Lewis, Ebenezer Belding, Thomas Phillips, Selectmen; and Joseph Mitchell, Constable.

After this, meetings were held annually, officers chosen and some votes passed.

In the warrant of 1768 is an article "to see if the town will Concur with a Vot past in Boston the 28 day of Oct. 1767 concerning Keeping Superfluities out of the Country. Voted £12 for the use of the Schol and other necsay town charges also to pay 2 shillings a day for labor for the town."

In 1769 three hogreeves, one clerk of the market and three tithing men were chosen. The clerk of the market was an office

similar to our scaler of weights and measures. The office of the tithing man on Sundays is thus described by a historian: "The tithing man was the person who distracted the congregation by trying to prevent mischievous boys and girls from making a disturbance. He tapped the whispering urchin on the head, jogged the snoring deacon, tortured the ear of the somnolent female, or if the culprit was too distant, rapped sharply on the pew rail, pointing his black rod at the offender." Another description reads, "A sort of Sunday constable, to quiet the restlessness of youth, and to disturb the slumbers of age."

In 1770, it was voted to purchase one acre and a half of land of Samuel Lillie for a burial ground near the meetinghouse, price 30 shillings. Also in 1772, voted to purchase a burial place of Chileab Smith for 12s. 6d.

From the year 1774 on, the records are tolerably full and complete—a book for that purpose being purchased in 1776 which was used until its last page was reached in 1814.

The Revolutionary War records we will reserve for another chapter, and give running extracts from the other records to show the progress the town was making.

In 1777, the town calls on the authorities to do all they can to restrain "vice and profanity among us." In 1778, five hog constables are chosen. Also the same year, voted "that the article for raising money for schools be dropped." This, of course, on account of the distress occasioned by the war. 1779, voted to sell the pew ground at public vendue, and lay out the money in repairing and finishing the meetinghouse and a committee was chosen for that purpose. Nine highway surveyors were chosen that year and £2000 raised for highways. Voted to pay £3 a day for a man's labor, the unfaithful to be paid accordingly. 30s. a day for a yoke of oxen, the same for a plow. This was in the old continental currency. The depreciation of this caused much trouble and embarrassment. The rate of depreciation is stated by authorities to be something like this: January, 1777, one hundred dollars in gold or silver was equal to \$105 in continental currency, in 1778 to \$325, in 1779 to \$742 and in 1780 to \$4000. In other words, it took \$40 in the continental money

to buy one silver dollar. It has been told by an old resident of Ashfield that the Indians in the employ of the whites about this time thought so little of the money that when paid off they would use it as wadding for their muskets, then shoot it off, saying, "Away goes Continenty."

In the earlier stages of the war, the town had borrowed money in silver or its equal and now creditors were making inquiries as to how they were to be recompensed. Quite a share of the able bodied men of the town were in the war and much money had been spent in providing for the support of these men and their families. A tax of about £20,000 had been levied by the State, which was to be paid in 1780. Even the estates of the men in the war were to be taxed, unless they had enlisted for three years, or for the war. The people could pay their highway tax because that could be "worked out," but they had little or no money to pay their other taxes. In 1779, voted that we raise £40 as an allowance to those who lent money the last year on account of the sink of money. They also vote to choose a committee of seven to consider town debts and make a report of the same. Later it was voted to allow the state tax now in the hands of collectors to remain uncollected. There were evidently quite a number of collectors located in different parts of the town. July 16, 1781, voted "that the Selectmen direct the constables not to take any money for town taxes until further orders." That year, £6,000 was voted for highways, also to pay \$30 per day for men's labor, \$15 for a team and same for a plow. Voted to sell more pew ground, and that Nathan Fuller take care of the meetinghouse, and that Mr. Warren Green be appointed chorister to assist other choristers in singing the Psalms in the Congregation.

In 1782, voted "that the Straglin Quarkers be ordered to leave town within 24 hours or Expect trouble." More in regard to this later.

They had now evidently gotten back upon a silver basis, for they raise this year only £80 for highways and pay 3 shillings per day for labor.

February 26, 1783, "Voted that we will *Not* pay the five and

twenty shillings State Tax on the poll nor no other State or County Tax or Taxes which may be Assessed upon the town of Ashfield, until we are informed by General Court or some other Authority the particular *use* the Said money is Designed for. Voted to set up the collection of taxes at public vendue. Bid off by Capt. Thomas Warner at 5s. on a £, which was a trifle less than 2 per cent. Voted to sell out the Pew Ground all round the Gallery of the Meeting House to the Highest Bidder and Lay out the money in Building Seats and Glassing the house."

This town shared in the general discontent throughout this portion of the state and with the feeling against the state government. There was little money, but many debts. The law at that time is said to have favored the creditor, and there were many executions and also imprisonments for debts. It was claimed that these actions were urged on by the lawyers and officers for the fees they were able to get out of it. In this town some were imprisoned for debt, as votes later show that money was raised by the town to help the prisoners after they were released.

May 1, 1786, Capt. Elisha Cranston was chosen representative to the General Court, and Dr. Phineas Bartlett, Lieut. Phillip Phillips and Mr. Thomas Stocking were chosen a committee to prepare instructions. These were his instructions: "1st, That he use his influence that the General Court be speedily removed out of the town of Boston. 2nd, That he use his influence to prevent one certain Act that is proposed to be established the first session of the General Court the present year entitled 'An Act to provide a supplementary supply for Congress for Twenty Five years,'—Unless the said grievance be removed it is our will that the said representative leave his seat."

By vote of the town, delegates had been sent to the Hatfield and other Conventions that had been held to try to devise means to relieve the condition of affairs. The town had also voted to recommend to the militia officers that they resign their commissions to their superior officers and as a town they were evidently in favor of rebellion. We find nothing in the town records

to show that a body of men from our town actually joined the small army under Shays or Day, but Dr. Shepard's statement that the military magazine stores were delivered by the town authorities into the hands of the insurgents, and that a company of men under a militia captain marched out of town to aid the rebellion is certainly entitled to belief, as his paper was written a little less than fifty years after these events, and the facts were fresh in the minds of many then living. But it is a little singular that we cannot now learn of more than four or five men from this town who were actually in arms under Shays.

In the old archives at the State House in Boston are the names of fifty Ashfield men who are recorded as "being concerned in the late rebellion" and who took the oath of allegiance before Samuel Taylor in the spring of 1787. By an act of the General Court, the insurgents were disfranchised until they took the oath of allegiance and delivered up their firearms. In this list are a number of the foremost men of the town, also quite a number who had been soldiers in the Revolution. The names follow: Elijah Wait, Simeon Smith, Aaron Lyon, Simeon Crittenden, Levi Crowell, Caleb Phillips, Daniel Shaw, Franey Ranney, Abram Stocking, Jonathan Lillie, Josiah Fuller, Abner Smith, David Ellis, Ebenezer Fuller, Josiah Washburn, Abner Kelley, Ephraim Williams, Joseph Warren, David Cobb, Isaac Crittenden, Isaac Crittenden, Jr., Calven Lazell, Elijah Smith, Asa Cranston, Samuel Taylor, Jonathan Cranson, Robert Lazelle, Elisha Cranson, Lemuel Stocking, Chipman Smith, Joshua Vincent, Jonathan Smith, Lemuel Brown, Reuben Bement, Elisha Parker, Seth Wait, Ezekiel Taylor, Joseph Stocking, Joseph Lillie, Daniel Ward, Jasher Taylor, Daniel Belding, John Bement, Alexander Ward, Ansel Brainard, David Hall, Joseph Warren, Jr., John Sadler, Amos Stocking, Ebenezer Belding, John Loomis. These men probably were not all in arms against the government, but were acknowledged sympathizers with the rebellion.

At the annual meeting in March, 1787, not one of the men on this list was elected to fill any of the thirty town offices for that year, being disqualified until they had taken the oath of

allegiance. Some men from this town were among the State troops, thus townsmen were in arms against each other. But it does not appear that those sympathizing in the rebellion suffered any ill feeling from the others, for they were afterwards called upon to aid in the counsels of the town as freely as before. Although differing as to the best means of remedying their troubles, there seemed to be a mutual feeling of forbearance and helpfulness among the people. The neighboring towns shared in the feeling shown by the citizens of this town. A large part of the men in Amherst were in the rebellion.

There is a well authenticated tradition which goes to prove that quite a number went from this town under Shays. It is said that when pursued by General Lincoln, the men from this section left Shays and buried their firearms in the woods in Pelham. After the rebellion had quieted down, one Joseph Lillie, who lived opposite where George Ward now lives, was sent down for the arms. As secrecy and caution had to be exercised he made his way to the place of concealment Saturday night under cover of darkness, and Sunday morning with the guns well covered in the sled he was on his way home. He was soon accosted by a tithing man who took him to account for travelling on the Sabbath. Lillie, whose face was well muffled up, said he would be glad to stop, but he supposed he was coming down with small pox and people didn't like to keep him. He was also held up by the guard at the ferry in Hadley but by a clever subterfuge escaped undetected.

The error fallen into by our ancestors in carrying their discontent and dissatisfaction into actual rebellion against the State government was not without some good result, for those in authority, seeing the determination of the people, did all in their power to relieve the situation.

In December, 1787, Ephraim Williams, Esq., was chosen delegate to attend State convention with instructions to vote against the new constitution. Voted to pay a bounty of four dollars for each wolf killed in town. 1788, voted to raise £30 to repair meetinghouse, also to sell pew ground in the gallery; this meant selling space for a pew, each man to furnish or build his own.



1790, voted that the "Selectmen warn such persons to depart out of this town as they shall judge necessary to prevent the town from cost and charge." In obedience to this vote the selectmen, through the constables, warned nearly one hundred men, including their families, out of town. Many of those warned, afterwards became the most substantial and wealthy men of the town.

In 1792, vote against the division of Hampshire County. The Buckland town line was run out substantially as it now is. In 1794 the dividing line was designated between the two sections of the town representing the North and South militia companies. In 1797, there was trouble over the boundary line between Ashfield and Goshen.

In 1799, "Voted to give the Rev. Nehemiah Porter a Lease of the Lot he now lives on for 999 years with the rent of one Pepper Corn yearly if Demanded." In 1800 voted to hire a teacher of music the ensuing winter and to raise \$60 for that purpose.

In 1804, they seem to be in favor of dividing the county, but at the next meeting they vote no. Still later they vote "We do wish Hampshire County might remain as it is." The county was divided and Franklin County was set off by itself in 1811.

As we look over the records at this period we are impressed by the fact that intense interest was shown by the town in the affairs of the state and nation. Dr. Shepard relates how they debated each Article in the State Constitution in open town meeting before voting upon it, and in 1808 it was "Voted that the Selectmen be directed to present a respectful petition to the President of the United States requesting him to use his endeavors to procure a Repeal of the Embargo." In 1813, "Voted to petition the Legislature of this Commonwealth requesting them to adopt constitutional measures to put a speedy stop to this unrighteous and oppressive war we are now engaged in and to prevent such oppression in the future." Also, "Voted to instruct the town clerk to send a copy of this vote to the Hampshire Gazette for publication." A petition was sent to Congress

praying that the war might be stopped, and Henry Bassett was sent as a delegate to the citizens' Convention at Northampton representing three counties in western Massachusetts, the object of which was to show to the government their desire for speedy peace. As is well known, the State was opposed to the war and refused the aid of the State militia for the purpose of carrying it on, but in the fall of 1814 there being danger of an invasion of the State by the British, Governor Strong ordered a draft upon the State militia. Nine men were required from Ashfield, and on Sunday the eleventh day of September the two companies, North and South, were hurriedly called together and the following men drafted as ordered: Joshua Knowlton, Eli Eldredge, Josiah Kelley, David Vincent, Cotton Mather, Anson Bement, George Hall, Capt. Justus Smith, Ziba Leonard, Jr. They helped to form a regiment of infantry made up from the companies in the northern part of old Hampshire County under the command of Col. Thomas Longley of Hawley. There was no fighting and at the end of about six weeks the men returned to their homes.

# CHAPTER V

## POPULATION

Valuation A. D. 1766		Houses	Lands	Slaves	Oxen	Cows	Horses	Swine	Sheep	Mills	Goats	Total for Asses'm't
No. of Polls	Names											£
1	David Alden	1	30	0	2	1	1	1	18	0	0	52
1	Sam <sup>l</sup> Anable	1	22	0	2	1	0	1	6	0	0	25
1	Lamberton Allen	0	5	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	15
1	Enoch Allen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Ebenezer Belding	1	24	0	1	2	1	3	13	0	0	59
1	Eben <sup>r</sup> Belding, Jr.	1	10	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	24
1	John Blackmer	1	5	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	14
1	Dr. Phineas Bartlett	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
1	John Bement	1	6	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	13
1	Moses Bacon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Asa Bacon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Zebulon Bryant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Roland Blackmer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Samuel Belding	1	42	0	2	6	1	3	14	0	0	95
1	Sam <sup>l</sup> Batchelder	1	4	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	8
1	John Briggs	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
1	John Belding	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
1	Nathan Chapin	1	49	0	4	4	1	1	50	0	0	105
1	Isaac Chansey	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
1	Isaac Crittenden	1	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	11
1	Isaac Crittenden, Jr.	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	6	0	0	2
2	Reuben Ellis	2	30	0	0	2	0	1	12	1	0	67
1	John Ellis	1	18	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	34
1	Jonathan Edson	1	7	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	19
2	Capt. Moses Fuller	1	27	0	0	3	1	3	10	0	4	69
1	Nathan Fuller	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
1	Aaron Fuller	1	8	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	20
1	Nathaniel Harvey	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
1	Dr. Moses Hayden	1	4	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	11
1	Joel Kellogg	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	24
1	Timothy Lewis	1	20	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	40
1	Aaron Lyon	1	8	0	2	2	0	2	8	0	0	27
1	Samuel Lillie	1	12	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	27
1	Jonathan Lillie	1	8	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	21
1	Daniel Lazelle	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
1	Joseph Mitchell	1	40	0	4	2	2	2	24	0	0	86
1	John Marble	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	Thomas Phillips	1	24	0	2	2	0	3	0	$\frac{2}{3}$	0	63
2	Richard Phillips	1	19	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	43
2	Benjamin Phillips	1	21	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	45
1	Phillip Phillips	1	40	0	0	3	1	3	12	$\frac{1}{3}$	0	92
1	Simeon Phillips	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	Chileab Smith	1	8	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	26

Valuation A. D. 1766		Houses	Lands	Slaves	Oxen	Cows	Horses	Swine	Sheep	Mills	Goats	Total for Assesment
No. of Polls	Names											£
1	Miles Standish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Israel Standish	1	12	0	0	1	0	2	4	0	0	28
1	Lemuel Snow	1	7	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	14
1	Joshua Sherwin	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
1	John Sadler	1	30	0	0	5	1	2	10	0	0	53
1	Moses Smith	1	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	70
3	Jonathan Sprague	2	9	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	29
1	Jonathan Sprague, Jr.	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
1	Ebenezer Sprague	1	5	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	12
1	Jonathan Taylor	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	5
1	Sam'l Truesdel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Nathan Wait	1	22	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	42
1	Jeremiah Wait	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
1	Elijah Wait	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	Samuel Washburn	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	10
1	Nehemiah Washburn	1	9	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	20
1	Jacob Washburn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	William Ward	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
1	William Ward, Jr.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	John Wilkie	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
1	Simeon Wood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Samuel Washburn, Jr.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Jonathan Yeamons	1	11	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	22
1	John Colburn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Joseph Row	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1	Isack Shepard	1	12	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	30

Total 71 names.

In the tax list for 1772 the following names were added to those of 1766. The figures give their valuation in pounds. Where no figures are given, only a poll tax was paid.

Ebenezer Aulden 5, Barnabas Alden 26, Asael Amsden 75, Samuel Allen 44, Daniel Bacon, Samuel Bartlett 62, Enos Blossom, John Belding 32, Edward Benton 21, Roland Blackmore 3, Bethel Benton, Silas Clark 6, Eli Colton 29, Benjamin Crittenden, Jesse Edson, 20½, Obed Edson 22, Israel Fay 20½, William Flower, William Ford, David Frary 12½, Ephraim Jennings, Abraham Kellogg 11, Eliab Linsey, Joseph Lillie 5, Timothy Lewis 25, Stephen Merrill, Daniel Mighles 8½, Daniel North, Timothy Perkins Jr., Timothy Perkins 27, Vespasian Phillips, Thomas Phillips, Jr. 20, Abner Phillips, Leonard Pike, Azariah Sheldon 1½, Daniel Shaw 26, Chileab Smith, Jr. 5, Ebenezer Smith 30, Enos Smith 2, Ephraim Smith 4, Moses Smith, Jr. 26, John Sherwin 30, Jonathan Shelley 1½, Barnabas

Taylor, Jasher Taylor 29, Edward Taylor, Joseph Warren 24, Isaiah Washburn.

The following is the list of tax payers for 1793, as certified to by Warren Green, John Bennett and Lemuel Spurr, Assessors:

Asaiel Amsden, David Alden, David Alden, Jr., John Alden, Barnabas Alden, Barnabas Alden, Jr., Lt. Samuel Allen, Samuel Allen, Jr., Eleazer H. Allen, Wd. Mary Allen, Esq. James Andras, Samuel Anable, Samuel Anable, Jr., Barnabas Anable, David Anable, Able Allis, Ebenezar Alden, Lt. Edward Anable, Henry Alden, Solomon Aldrich, Benjamin Aldrich, David Arms, Samuel Arms, Lemuel Alden, Lemuel Allis, Dr. John Bement, Phineas Bement, John Bement, Ruben Bement, Samuel Bement, Severance Bement, Joseph Bishop, Samuel Burton, Samuel Belding, Samuel Belding, Jr., Ebenezer Belding, Ebenezer Belding, Jr., Daniel Belding, John Belding, Samuel Bardwell, Bezor Benton, Bethel Benton, Lot Bassett, Capt. John Bennett, Joseph Baker, Jonathan Baldwin, David Baldwin, David Baldwin, Jr., Lt. Zebulon Briant, Nathan Batchelder, Samuel Batchelor, Lemuel Brown, Thomas Bowker, Benjamin Bracket, Davis Butler, Dr. Phineas Bartlett, John Baldwin, Levi Cook, Elisha Cranson, Jr., Asa Cranson, Abner Cranson, Jonathan Cranson, Stephen Cross, Cephas Cross, John Cross, Nathaniel Clark, Isaac Crittenden, Simeon Crittenden, Silas Clark, Nathan Chapin, Wd. Priscilla Cobb, George Cobb, Josiah Cobb, David Cranson, Josiah Drake, Jesse Daw, Lt. John Ellis, David Ellis, Levi Eldredge, Eli Eldredge, Samuel Elmer, Samuel Elmer, Jr., Zenas Elmer, Thomas Furbush, Ebenezer Furbush, Nathan Fuller, Solomon Fuller, Ebenezer Fuller, Josiah Fuller, Zachariah Field, Lamrock Flower, Capt. Lamrock Flower, Maj. William Flower, William Flower, Jr., Luis Foster, Moses Frary, Israel Guile, Robert Gray, Jonathan Gray, James Gray, Samuel Gilford, Eldad F. Goodwin, Warren Green, Randall Graves, David Jepson, Anson Green, Seth Gates, Dea. Antony Howes, Kimball Howes, Zachariah Howes, Samuel Howes, Heman Howes, Samuel Hall, Wd. Bathsheba Howes, Ezekiel Howes, Ruben Hall, Joshua Howes, Mark Howes, Joseph Howes, Nathaniel Kellogg, John King, Abner Kelley, Jacob Kilburn, Lt. Samuel Kilburn, Joshua Knowlton, Zebulon King, Amos Karr, Benjamin Karr, John Lumis, Josiah Lumis, Joseph Lilly, Jonathan Lilly, Bethuel Lilly, Eliakim Lilly, Foster Lilly, Esq. Robert Lazell, Calvin Lazell, James Lealand, Aaron Lyon, David Lyon, Jonathan Lyon, Lt. Samuel Lincoln, Lt. Josiah Moody, Capt. Robert Mantor, Lt. Jeremiah Mantor,

Dr. Francis Mantor, James Mantor, Ezra Moody, Daniel Mighells, John Mighells, Jesse Merrill, Stephen Merrill, Heman Marchant, Samuel Nims, Capt. Selah Norton, Asa Newton, Janna Osgood, Phillip Phillips, Esq., Thomas Philips, Elijah Phillips, Abner Phillips, Lemuel Phillips, Phillip Phillips, 2nd, David Phillips, Simeon Phillips, Dea. John Porter, Richard Phillips, Vespasian Phillips, Palatiah Phillips, Spencer Phillips, Daniel Phillips, Caleb Phillips, Timothy Perkins, Jr., Abiezar Perkins, Eliab Perkins, Elisha Parker, Joseph K. Pain, Samuel Paine, Joseph Paine, Jr., Caleb Packard, Joseph Pratt, Samuel Porter, Joseph Porter, Asa Porter, Ebenezer Putney, John Perry, Sylvester Phillips, Israel Phillips, Joseph Porter, Joseph Persons, Calvin Record, Lebbeus Rude, Benjamin Rogers, George Ranney, Francis Ranney, Joseph Smith, Joseph Smith, Jr., Joseph Stocking, Capt. Thomas Stocking, Abraham Stocking, Lemuel Stocking, Jonathan Smith, Amos Stocking, Samuel Stocking, Joseph Shepard, Dea. Moses Smith, David Smith, Salmon Smith, Chileab Smith, 2nd, Jeduthan Smith, Chileab Smith, 3rd, Capt. Sylvanus Smith, 3rd, Israel Standish, Levi Steel, Elijah Smith, Martin Smith, Dea. Isaac Shepard, Isaac Shepard, John Sherwin, Nathaniel Sherwin, Noah Saddler, Joshua Saddler, Rowland Sears, Paul Sears, Enos Sears, Elisha Smead, Chipman Smith, Abner Smith, Jonathan Smith, 2nd, Asa Selden, Lemuel Spurr, Elnathan Sanderson, Ebenezer Smith, Jr., Obed Smith, Isaiah Taylor, Thomas Tower, Samuel Tinny, Dea. Jonathan Taylor, Jasher Taylor, 2nd, Lt. Jasher Taylor, Jonathan Taylor, Jr., Stephen Taylor, Ezekiel Taylor, Isaac Tower, Barnabas Taylor, Edward Taylor, James Usher, Joshua Vincent, Ephraim Williams, Apollos Williams, Stephen Warren, Joseph Warren, Jr., Seth Wait, Seth Wait, Jr., Gad Wait, Capt. Thomas Warner, Nathan Wait, Asa Wait, Isiah Washburn, Joshua Weldon, Daniel Ward, John Ward, Alexander Ward, Elijah Ward, Esq. Thomas White, Jonathan Yeamons, Aaron Cross' Estate, Caleb Ward, Elijah Wait.

The heaviest tax payer was Ephraim Williams, Esq., his tax being more than twice as high as any other person. Six persons were taxed for a "faculty," viz: Dr. Phineas Bartlett and Dr. Francis Mantor as physicians, Zachariah Field as hotel keeper, John Bennett as hatter, Levi Cook as saddler, and Thomas White as blacksmith.

April 1, 1822, voted to define the limits of the school districts in the town of Ashfield in the following manner, that is to say—



Voted, that John Ellis, Dimmick Ellis, Ormon Flower, Elbridge G. Flower, Horatio Flower, William Flower, Phineas Flower, John Alden, Cyrus Alden, Jesse Ranney, Silas Kimberly, John Eldridge, 2nd, Elisha DeWolf, John Belding, Moses Belding, Ebenezer Belding, Ashur Belding, John Perry, and Daniel Perry shall constitute a school district by the name of the north east middle school district. (Beldingville.)

Voted that Samuel Bement, Jonathan Yeomans, Jonathan Yeomans, Jun., Israel Phillips, Joshua Phillips, William Bassett, David Lyon, Marshall Lyon, Eli Gray, Isaac Shepard, Joseph Paine, Joseph R. Paine, Benjamin Paine, Howard Edson, Jesse Edson, Daniel Perkins, Roswell Ward, Joseph Paine, Jr., Obed Elmer and Jeremiah Look shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the north middle district. (Wardville.)

Voted that Peter Wells, Asa Sanderson, Chester Bement, Nehemiah Hathaway, Lyman Cross, Charles Williams estate, Thomas Shephard, Thomas White, Elijah Paine, Cotton Mather, Widow Norton, John Williams, Jr., Levi Cook, Levi Cook, Jr., Ira Cook, Atherton Clark, Enos Smith, Levi Miller, Jerry Nash, James McFarland, Chester Sanderson, Abner Phillips, Caleb Ward, Ellis Pratt, Joseph Ranney, Samuel Eldredge, Consider McFarland, and Ebenezer and Horatio Montague's estate shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the plain district. (Plain.)

Voted that John McClintock, William McClintock, Samuel Brownson, Stephen Damon, Thomas Morton, Amos Carr, Jr., Otis Andrews, Timothy Catlin, Timothy Catlin, Jr., Samuel Elmer, Elijah Tobey, Henry Alden, Widow Mary Elmer, Samuel Paine, Widow Alice Elmer, Nathaniel Davis, Adolphus Elmer, Ebenezer Eames, Chileab Smith, Chileab Smith, Jr., Ziba Smith, Widow Sarah Shepard, Luther Elmer, Abel Pettibone, Albert Brownson, Jonathan Richmond, Thomas Phillips, Russel Phillips, Nathan Lyon, William Lyon, Elijah Brownson, Roger Brownson, Enos Harvey, John Alden, 2nd, Elias Smith, and James Andrews shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the north east school district. (Baptist Corner.)

Voted that Luther Ranney, Widow Rachel Ranney, Nathan Wood, Parsons Mansfield, Erastus Mansfield, Thomas Blood, Martin Smith, Justus Smith, 2nd, Reuben Smith, Ephraim

Wheeler, Giles Ranney, Francis Ranney, Stoddard Nims, Simon Collins, Alvan Clark, Friend Knowlton, Widow Knowlton, the farm left by Asa Porter and Elijah Smith, Jr., do constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the south east school district. (Chapel Falls.)

Voted that Joseph Barber, John Barber, Samuel Barber, Ebenezer Cranson, Micajah Howes, Zachariah Howes, Stephen Cross, Stephen S. Cross, Alvan Cross, Robert Gray, Robert Hartwell, Jonathan Gray, Elias Gray, David Gray, Silas Blake, Dorus Blake, Hosea Blake, Widow Gray and Michael Warren do constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the Briar Hill school district.

Voted that Archibald Burnet, Daniel Burnet, Nathaniel Holmes, Chester Wrisley, Thomas Ranney, William Ranney, Roswell Ranney, Horatio Bartlett, Phineas Bement, Anson Bement, Lemuel Brown, Joel Brown, John Bement, James Andrews, Reuben Bement, Jared Bement, Sumner Bement, Wait Bement, Adolphus Andrews, John Pease, Jasper Bement, Russel Bement, Ebenezer Taylor, David Howes, Marcena Sanderson, Elijah Wait, Enoch Bennet, Samuel Ranney, George Ranney, Reuben Ranney, Charles Adams, Gad Wait, Samuel Guilford, Walter Guilford, James King, Salmon Miller and John M. Mansfield shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of the south east middle school district. (Round School.)

Voted that Joseph Bishop, Whiting Kellogg, Gilbert Richardson, Aaron Belding, Dorus Graves, Joseph Warren, Benjamin Rogers, Abner Rogers, Joseph Manning, Anson Goodwin, and John B. Simpson shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield. (South Ashfield.)

Voted that Noah Douglas, David Williams, Jonathan Howes, Joseph Hall, Lot Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Simeon Phillips, Heman Howes, Joseph Hall, Jr., Timothy Perkins, Elisha Bassett, Henry Bassett, Abraham Stocking, Herod Stocking, George Hall, Jonathan Lilly, Jr., Joseph Porter, Austin Lilly, Chipman Lilly, Ebenezer Porter, Joseph C. Smith, Justus Smith, George Barrus, Isaac Hall, Eliakim Lilly, Arannah Hall's farm, Benjamin Wing, Elisha Wing, Daniel Mighles, Ezekiel Mighles, Nathaniel Clark, Chipman Smith, Lucius Smith, Ephraim Williams, Abel Williams, Silas Clark, Jonathan Taylor, David Taylor, Jonathan Kilburn, Zebulon Briant, William Briant,

Josiah Fuller, Joseph Fuller, Luke Fuller, Thomas Hall and Barnabas Alden shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield, by the name of Steady Lane school district.

Voted that Eli Eldredge, Eli Eldredge, Jr., Lot Hall, Ather-ton Hall, Stephen Taylor, Ansel Taylor, Forris Jepson, Ezekiel Taylor, Judah Taylor, Isaac Taylor, Jonathan Sears, Asarelah Sears, Peter Richardson, Ahirah Sears, Sanford Boice, Widow Eleanor Sears, Elisha Parker, William Sears, Levi Eldredge, Barnabas Eldredge, Samuel Eldredge, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Abner Kelley, Abner Kelley, Jr., Josiah Kelley, Asa Selden, Jesse Selden, Thomas Tower, Chester Tower, and Paul Sears shall constitute a school district in the town of Ashfield by the name of Cape Street.

Voted that Ebenezer Putney, Lazarus Barrus, Elisha Phillips, Stephen Warren, Ammiel Weeks, John Eldredge, Ebenezer Y. Palmer, Apollos Williams, Lemuel Phillips, Daniel Williams, Nathan Beals, Lot Bassett, Francis Bassett, Isaiah Jenkins, Joseph Gurney, Zechariah Gurney, Comfort Beals, Jacob Dyer, Laban Stetson, Benjamin Dyer, Jesse Dyer, Jonathan Baldwin, Moses Baldwin, John Ford, Thomas Bassett, Solomon Hill, Caleb Packard, Jr., Elisha Hubbard, Abiram Phillips, Hiram Beals, Leonard Jenkins, and Caleb Church shall constitute a school district by the name of south west school district. (Spruce Corner.)

Voted that George Williams, Asa Guilford, Isaac Church, Daniel Mighles, Jr., Lemuel Eldredge, Aaron Ward, Jonah Fuller, Timothy Warren, Kimble Howes, Willard Howes, Bethuel Lilly, Bethuel Lilly, Jr., Albinus Lilly, Seth Church, Ezra Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Thaddeus Rude, Jr., Nathan Porter, Samuel Porter, Samuel Porter, Jr., Joel Lilly, and the farm Aaron Ward sold to Lucius Smith shall constitute a school district by the name of the west school district. (Watson.)

Voted that Alexander Ward, Zephaniah Richmond, Benjamin Bracket, Ezra Bracket, Ziba Leonard, Israel Williams, Widow Ruth Taylor, Zebulon Taylor, Ebenezer Forbes, Daniel Forbes, Barnabas Howes, Joseph Vincent, Joseph Vincent, Jr., David Vincent, David Vincent, Jr., Joshua Vincent, Mark Howes, Ezekiel Howes, Daniel Sears, Enos Howes, Jeremiah Taylor, Barnabas A. Howes, Ezekiel Howes, Jr., George Howes and Mary Rude shall constitute a school district by the name of the Northwest school district.

## POPULATION OF ASHFIELD FROM 1765 TO 1905

Copied from the State Census Report, 1905

1765 (Prov.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	(628)	—
1776 (Prov.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	628	—
1790 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,459	+831
1800 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,741	+282
1810 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,809	+68
1820 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,748	—61
1830 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,732	—16
1840 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,610	—122
1850 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,394	—216
1855 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,342	—52
1860 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,302	—40
1865 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,221	—81
1870 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,180	—41
1875 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,190	+10
1880 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,066	—124
1885 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,097	+31
1890 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,025	—72
1895 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,013	—12
1900 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	955	—58
1905 (State)	.	.	.	.	.	.	959	+4
1910 (U. S.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	959	0

Out of the fifteen towns then in Hampshire County in 1765, the returns from Huntstown, Sunderland and Greenwich were not sent in for that census, and the population has been called that of the next succeeding census, thus Huntstown is given 628 in 1765, the same number it had eleven years later. The twelve towns in the county that sent in their census in 1765 give 1,532 houses and 10,567 inhabitants, an average of a little less than seven for each habitation.

The property census of the town signed by the selectmen in 1766 and given on a preceding page, does not give the population, but has on the list 47 houses. If our town was on an average with the other towns in the county, it would give a population of 329 in 1765 which is probably very near the correct number of inhabitants the year our town was incorporated.

It is seen by the table of population that there was a steady increase of the number of inhabitants up to 1810, after that, a

decrease. The records of the churches show that from the time this tax list was given in 1793 up to 1820 there were many dismissals and recommendations to the "distant west," "to a church in York State," or "to a church of the same denomination wherever Providence may call them." A comparison of the list in 1793 with that given of the heads of families in the school districts show that many of the surnames go out and new ones come in. All of the Anables, the Standishes, many of the Smiths, Shepards, Phillipses and others went out. Most of these went to western New York, where many of their descendants may now be found among the most solid and substantial people of that section. A few emigrated to western Virginia, going with a cart and oxen, and being over six weeks on the way. Of those who went to West Virginia were David and Elijah Phillips, brothers of the great grandfather of Ralph Phillips, and Joseph Howes, brother of the great grandfather of Allison Howes. These men had large families when they moved away and their descendants are now living chiefly in Barbour and Upshur Counties. Like most of the Union men in that section they took an active part in the Civil War. Eighteen of the grandchildren of David Phillips who went from here were in the war, one was killed in battle, one starved in a southern prison, one was wounded and made a cripple for life, and one was captain of a company. Fenelon Howes, a grandson of Joseph, was colonel of a West Virginia regiment.

Many letters to friends in Ashfield from those emigrating to York State in early years, are given in the Ellis book. People returning for a visit usually gave good reports of the new country which was an incentive to others to follow. Mr. David S. Howes used to tell the story of a cousin of his, son of Joseph, coming back from the new country, and when it was hinted to him that some of his stories of the new section, West Virginia, might be slightly exaggerated, he said, "Oh, no. Why, the clover there grows so big they use the stalks for fence rails."

It seems hardly credible that the cultivation of a single crop should have anything to do with the lessening of the population



of Ashfield, but facts go to show that the rise and fall of the peppermint industry here affected the population seriously.

About the year 1812, Samuel Ranney, who had come from Chatham, Connecticut, and settled on the place now occupied by Wallace Whitney, began in a small way the raising of peppermint and in a short time had a small distillery for converting the plant into oil. The business proving profitable, the neighbors entered into it, so that in 1821 there were five distilleries in operation in town, and in 1830 ten, some distilling not only peppermint, but spearmint, hemlock, spruce, tansy, wintergreen and other oils. Soon these oils were manufactured into essences and peddlers began to go out from Ashfield selling these goods. Jasper and Joseph Bement put up the essences and sent out hundreds of young men every year from Ashfield and vicinity. Seventy years ago there were few young men in Ashfield who had not started out with the strap neck yoke over the shoulders suspending a basket of essences on one side and a tin trunk of Yankee notions on the other. Some were satisfied with one short trip, and were glad to return to the shelter of the old homestead, while others continued the business for years.

Tradition says that the decline of the peppermint industry came about in this way: One of the Burnet family who had located near Phelps, N. Y., received a letter from his friends here, saying that they had an important secret to communicate to him which they dare not send by letter. He came east, traveling a large share of the way on foot, and learned that the secret was the profitable raising of peppermint, which the friends thought he might do well with in his new settlement. When he returned he took with him a quantity of peppermint roots and started the plants in the rich soil of his section. They flourished and in a few years he and his neighbors were engaged quite largely in its cultivation. It was found that it could be more easily cultivated and larger crops raised than at the east. The news reaching the east, very soon there was a general exodus from Ashfield of the peppermint raisers and others to the country around Phelps, N. Y. Archibald Burnet, the father of the peppermint pioneer in New York, went out and with him quite a



number of the Ranney families, some of the Beldings, Ellises, Phillippes, and many others. The loss of so many of these leading families was greatly felt.

The Ranneys were among the most enterprising men in town. One of them built the house now owned by Albert Howes, another the house owned by Sanford Boice, still another the brick house where Wallace Whitney now lives. Archibald Burnet was the ancestor of the present Willis, and the marriage of his son Nahum, is thus chronicled in an old *Hampshire Gazette* of 1811. "In Ashfield Feb. 20th, Mr. Nahum Burnet to Miss Hannah Brown, both of Ashfield.

'Tis nothing strange that Hannah should  
Dislike her name and turn it,  
But how could she in loving mood,  
E'er condescend to Burn-et?"

In 1892, it was estimated that over \$400,000 worth of peppermint oil was manufactured annually in Wayne County, New York, where many of the Ashfield people located. For a few years past the cultivation of the herb and manufacture of the oil has been carried on largely in Michigan, where many of the descendants of the earlier emigrants are now living.

A portion of the facts given above is from clippings preserved by Mr. Henry S. Ranney, from a Phelps, N. Y., paper in 1893 on the question "Who introduced the peppermint industry?" in which discussion Mr. Ranney gave some information by request.

The outgoing of so many young men from 1830 to 1850 made a loss to the town in numbers. The selling of the goods was considered a respectable as well as a profitable business. There were few drug stores and the venders of the essences, cordials, liniments, and so forth, were usually welcomed by the families. Most of them attended strictly to business, avoided the vices and pitfalls, and not only made some money, but gained a knowledge of the world and of human nature generally which was a real education to them, and which laid the foundation for a good business career, for which they often found a larger scope outside of their native town.

Dr. William P. Paine, who was contemporary with this period, says in his centennial address:

There has generally been a class of men, greater or smaller at different periods of the town's history of much enterprise and thrift. Many considerable fortunes were made in former portions of the century in the traffic of various essences and oils. There were several distilleries where all kinds of herbs and plants that could find a market were made to contribute of their peculiarities. Ashfield essence peddlers could be found in any number all over this and neighboring states, and many made their way far to the west and south. Money flowed into the town in many and large currents, and not a few becoming independent left their mother town which had served them so well, and went to other parts much to her disadvantage.

And Dr. Ellis in his notice of the removal of a prominent man from Ashfield to Phelps, N. Y., in this period, says:

It may be said that in the early part of the present century, trafficking in various oils and essences was a very common pursuit in this part of the country. About 1815, Ashfield had attained its largest population, so that there was quite a surplus of inhabitants and hence a pressing necessity for all who could, to seek other and newer locations. And it is not far from the truth to say that about the first and second generations in the present century of New England youths, when they attained to years approaching manhood, invariably supplied themselves with a pair of willow baskets or tin trunks, and with these well filled with oils, essences, pins, needles, thread, &c, suspended from their shoulders by a yoke, started out from the paternal fireside to "see the world," and prospect for a situation in life. *Many thousands* of these young men, full of life and energy, and Yankee sagacity, thus equipped, perambulated New York and the western states. They were the pioneers in all the newer sections of the West, where most of them made for themselves a habitation and a name before they returned to the old homes in the east, unless, as was the case with many, to make a hasty visit to secure a wife from among the blooming damsels left behind, who proved themselves no less courageous and desirous to face the trials of pioneer life, than had their brothers and newly made husbands before them.

However widely separated they became, there ever remained an attachment for the old home which time could not efface.

Love for the scenes of their youth grew with the years and were ever fresh in their memories. Truly could they say:

We see it all—the pictures that our memories held so dear  
The homestead in New England far away,  
And the vision is so natural—like we almost seem to hear  
The voices that were hushed but yesterday.

Indeed, it is conceded that to the energy, enterprise, and heroism of New England youth is attributed the rapid settlement, development and populating of several western states, and wherever this influence was felt, there was left for all time the impress for good, of New England's best genius, independence and love of justice and liberty.



## CHAPTER VI

### ROADS AND POST OFFICES

We have had an account of the first road laid out to Huntstown in 1754, also of the road from Bellows Hill over the hill down past the corn mill, then up to what is now the village.

In 1766, a road was petitioned for from Whately to Williamstown through Ashfield. It seems that the authorities did not see fit to establish it further west than Ashfield, for the survey is recorded as beginning about forty rods west of where Joseph Tatro now lives and running easterly and southerly through what is now Conway, a part of the way evidently on the trail laid out in 1754. Later, various town roads were laid out, frequently requiring gates to be put up by owners of the lands through which the roads passed.

In a survey of the town made by E. Williams and R. Sears, committee in 1795, four county roads are laid down as running through the town, viz, a short piece running northwesterly across the northeast corner of the town, past where S. P. Elmer now lives, the second entering the town east of Frank Loveland's and passing through Wardville, and near the house of Dana Graves, to Buckland Four Corners. The third had its entrance near where the present Conway road is, below Sanford Boice's, through South Ashfield, up past the Goodwin place, and the Orville Hall place, over "Bug Hill," through Watson to Plainfield line. The fourth was the road running directly past Alvan Barrus' house in Goshen, then continuing northerly to "Spruce Corner," then turning westerly, past the Bassett place into Plainfield.

In 1814, John Alden was chosen agent to oppose the new road from Greenfield to Ashfield "in all its stages." Vote, 98 to 20. In 1818, the town chose Thomas White, Esq., to appear at Court of Sessions at Greenfield to oppose building a bridge at Shelburne Falls.

From the county road east, the village was approached by two roads, one coming from near the Parker place in South Ash-

field, over the hill, entering the village from the south, past Mr. Farragut's house. Another road from South Ashfield came past Arthur Williams' house, then through a ravine up to the flat east of Mrs. Alvan Hall's. In 1830, the change was made to the "Dug Hill" road, winding around the hill.

The earliest road to Buckland ran north on the easterly side of "Ridge Hill" to the gap between the ridges near the old Edson or Chandler Bronson place, then on the westerly side of the ridge. Later, the route was west of the pond, still later, east—its present location.

In 1826, a county road was laid out by the commissioners, the record reading as follows: "Beginning at a stone on the westerly side of a road leading north and south by John Williams Jr's tavern, thence West  $18^{\circ}$  North 109 rods to the chimney of Peter Wells' house, thence West  $33^{\circ}$  North 12 rods to Asa Sanderson's land, thence in the same direction 80 rods to a red oak stump on the sand bank," thence on, giving courses and distances into the town of Hawley. The road was to be four rods wide to Asa Sanderson's land and three rods beyond that. The starting point was on the corner near Mrs. Rosa Ranney's house where the stone still stands, and Peter Wells' chimney was near where C. A. Bronson's house now is. This road was called a great improvement. The old road ran up the hill near Belding's cross road to the corner near Allison Howes', thence northerly by Bassett's, past Ezra Packard's to the Perkins place, then crossed over westerly to the present highway. At the Sullivan place it followed what is now the Bear Swamp road to where the reservoir now is, then turned to the right and came out to the present road at the top of the hill east of Henry and Abbott Howes'. The "Crossway" beyond the Sullivan place was then a very wet and swampy ravine, and the whole distance through it had to be built of logs laid crosswise and covered with brush and earth. The job of building was let to Ezra Williams, who was a famous road builder and a man of pluck and energy. Uncle Ezra hired a gang of men at \$8 per month, had a small, movable house in which to board and lodge his help, and put his road through on time. The road was considered so great an



improvement that the stage route from Boston to Albany which before ran through Spruce Corner was changed to this road, passing Uncle Ezra's tavern in the northwest part of the town, and through Hawley.

A road was laid from Hatfield Equivalent (Plainfield) through Spruce Corner as early as 1770, since which many changes have been made. The Briar Hill road was laid out in 1827 from Ephraim Williams' (Orville Hall's place) southerly to Goshen line.

In the thirties, many town roads were voted on. There seems to have been a kind of road fever, to check which apparently, Thomas White, Samuel Bassett and Dimmick Ellis were chosen a committee "to oppose the laying of roads," this in 1838. Notwithstanding this, in 1842, quite a change was made between Henry Taylor's and Spruce Corner, also soon quite a sum was expended on the hill towards Buckland. In 1850, the Bear Swamp road was built, the petitioners binding themselves that it should not cost the town over \$906, excluding jury trials. Mr. Jehiel Perkins was not satisfied with the damage the selectmen awarded him, and called out a jury who gave him a less sum than the selectmen, thus throwing the cost on himself.

In 1853, the road down the stream below the South Ashfield schoolhouse was built and in 1868 from South Ashfield to Williamsburg. In some cases there was strong opposition to the road. At one time a strong opponent of a road called a special meeting to oppose the road. At the hour named for the meeting, the friends of the road being in the majority, the opponent was elected moderator, and a motion was immediately made to dissolve the meeting, which was carried by a large vote, the whole proceeding not lasting ten minutes.

The first roads to and about the plantation were simply trails used only for footmen and those on horseback. Later, the trees and fallen timber must have been cut away so that oxen and a sled could come through. One of the mill-stones for the old mill, built in 1743 on Pond Brook, probably came from Northampton, drawn by a yoke of oxen on a sled. It was considered no great hardship to ford the streams, and it does not appear

that bridges were built over Bear and South Rivers for quite a number of years after the town was settled.

Not very large sums were raised for roads before the Revolution, but in 1781, \$6,000 of the old Continental currency was raised for highways, \$30 per day was allowed for a man's labor, the same for a yoke of oxen and a plow. In 1800, the highway surveyors were instructed to post notices of the day when they were to commence work on roads. In 1803, "Voted to allow 90 cts. per day for men's labor faithfully performed—before July 1; 60 cts. per day after, and 50 cts. after Sept. 1. For extraordinary work the surveyor may allow more if he thinks just—price of a cart and plow to be left at the discretion of the surveyor, and if a person is slack and negligent in his work the surveyor may deduct as much out of his work as he shall think just and proper." These surveyors were chosen in open town meeting, usually by nomination, and as it was considered courtesy to "take turns," the best supervising talent was not always secured. Two sets of tax bills were made out by the assessors—a money and a highway tax. Individuals could pay their highway tax in money if they chose, but it was not often done—labor being more plentiful than cash.

These highway districts could be made larger or smaller by a vote of the town. There were usually a larger number of highway districts than school districts. It was preëminently a social system. It gave the people of the neighborhood a chance to get together and discuss the questions of the neighborhood, town and nation. A yoke of cattle with a plow would open a few furrows on each side of the road next the ditch and a line of men with hoes would haul it into the center. Not only were weighty topics discussed, but a good many stories swapped. A faithful surveyor with tact would get considerable labor out of the men, and most were interested to improve the roads, but the plans of the surveyor were not always approved by all the men, and discussions as to how a piece of work should be done consumed some time.

In 1862, at the annual meeting, some voter had the temerity to criticise this system severely, and made a motion that a

money tax be assessed and the repair of the roads be left with the selectmen, which after considerable discussion and opposition was carried. But the people were so wedded to the old system that they went back the next year, and for six years highway surveyors were chosen. In 1869, it was left with the selectmen to appoint agents instead of electing them in open meeting, but in 1870 they were elected again, then for several years it was left with the selectmen to expend the money and appoint agents at their discretion. In 1876, the old feeling broke out again, and for two years, the selectmen were instructed to appoint thirty-three agents and give every man an opportunity to work out what would be his portion of the tax at \$1.50 per day, then for three years it was left with the selectmen; in 1881, back to the \$1.50 per day and every man a chance. Since that year it has been left in the hands of the selectmen to "expend the money raised for highways at their discretion."

The first road machine was bought in 1883. It was sent first on trial, and when one of the selectmen and several assistants were testing it on the village street, the dry wit of the town, who with others was watching its operations, said, "Oh, they'll buy it quick enough if they can ride and do the work, only they'll want a big umbrella to keep the sun off, and a place to carry a jug of cider."

With one exception the town has been very fortunate in freedom from losses by damages caused by defective highways. In 1815 the town voted Samuel Hall, Jr., \$40 for injury to his horse on the highway. In 1843 Rev. H. H. Rouse began a suit against the town on account of an accident on a road in South Ashfield, which lingered in the courts for quite a while but we find no account of damage paid, only \$61 to Greenfield lawyers for "costs in Rouse case." Small sums less than \$100 have been paid to a few other individuals.

In August, 1867, as a four-horse coach laden with a pleasure party was driving through Baptist Corner, the bridge near where Sidney P. Elmer now lives broke down and eight or ten persons were precipitated into the stream below. Some were more or less injured and claimed damages from the town. Some of the

cases were easily settled, the demands seeming just and reasonable, in others they were deemed excessive, and the selectmen declined to pay the amounts demanded. The town voted to leave the matter to their judgment and discretion.

According to the reports of the selectmen and treasurer, the sums paid for damages in this case were as follows:

L. Cross, self and horses . . . .	\$100.00
Cross & Phillips, wagon . . . .	125.00
H. R. Warriner . . . . .	1,500.00
“ “ “ for daughter . . . . .	500.00
Mrs. Franklin Howes . . . . .	115.02
Mrs. Benjamin Andrews (arbitration)	311.67
Suit with Franklin Howes . . . .	4,462.70
Witness fees, &c . . . . .	1,127.77
Doctors' bills . . . . .	75.00
Lawyers in above cases . . . . .	450.00
Dyer suit, tried in Boston . . . .	20,535.84
	<hr/>
	\$29,303.00

Other expenses incident to the accident brought the total over \$30,000. This, coming as it did after the severe expenses of the war, was a heavy blow to the town, but by judicious and conservative management the debt was paid in a reasonable time, this too, without neglect of public improvements, for which the town has always shown a fair and liberal spirit.

#### THE POST OFFICE AND STAGE ROUTES

Mail facilities were slow in coming into the country. Up to the year 1792, no post office was nearer to Ashfield than the one at Springfield. At that date an office was established at Northampton. Several years later the office at Worthington was the one nearest to this town. A private weekly post, to carry papers between Northampton and Hawley, via Ashfield and Charlemont, was established in 1789. The names of the post-riders were: Andrew Wood of Hawley, from 1789 to 1791 and from 1792 to 1799; Stephen Taylor, 1791; Ethan A. Clary, 1799,

1800; Bliss Furbush, 1800-3 (the three last named were of Ashfield); Joseph Richardson, 1804-11; Josiah Shaw, Jr., 1811-14.

Files of the *Northampton Gazette* from 1800 and later, contain advertisements of letters in those post offices for citizens of Ashfield. At that time there were about eighteen hundred inhabitants here and people were obliged to travel eighteen miles to get their letters. This state of things continued for over twenty years, when in 1814 the government established a post office in this town; the mail being carried from Northampton via Conway, Ashfield and Charlemont, once a week each way. Levi Cook, Esq., was the first postmaster here, and kept the office in his saddler's shop. The care of the office has remained in his family to the present time, with the exception of one or two years. After the death of Miss Eliza Jane Cook in 1912, a tablet was placed in the town hall in commemoration of the post-office service of the Cook family for ninety-five years.

In March, 1824, the first daily mail was established here; at that time a four-horse stage began its trips through Conway, Ashfield and Plainfield, as part of a mail route between Boston and Albany.

In his "Church Historical Address," Dr. Shepard says: "We received a weekly mail from the east, but when a line of stages was set up, bringing us within two days of the capital of the state, and delivering the mail on each alternate day, the event was hailed as a new era of light."

The stage on this mail and passenger line from Boston to Albany started from Greenfield at 3 A. M., reaching Ashfield via Conway between five and six in the morning. It was a lively scene when in the early dawn, with the bugle blasts, the four-horse coach rolled into the street from the east with its eight or ten passengers, pulled up at the hotel to change horses, while Esq. Cook hurried to change the mail; then on through Spruce Corner and Plainfield (later via "Uncle Ezra's" and Joy's tavern in Hawley) to Bowker's in Savoy, to Adams, and on to Albany, where they arrived the next morning at three.

In these days of steam and electric cars, saying nothing of automobiles, this would seem a hard trip, but our hardy ances-

tors regarded it a pleasure. A writer said some years since: "In early times the only means of public travel was the stage coach, a thing of comfort in its day, sometimes a luxury in travel. Well do we remember the time when lines of stages were run between important places with their relays of horses between every ten or fifteen miles, the tooting horn announcing its approach, the jolly passengers who would alight for the noon meal, or to stretch their legs up some long hill, then in again to ride on to their destination. Say what you will, the old stage coach was an institution which, though it has gone, can never be forgotten."

The early stage drivers were Lucius Paine, Josephus Crafts, Uncle Ezra Williams and a Mr. Loud.

The fare from Greenfield to Albany was at first \$3.00. Business was reported good, although there was another line running through Charlemont over the Hoosac Mountain.

The opening of the Connecticut Railroad to South Deerfield in 1846, bringing the mail from the east via Springfield, broke up the through stage lines and a daily stage was started from Ashfield to South Deerfield, taking mail and passengers east and south and bringing them to Ashfield, where there was a connection with another daily stage running from here through Spruce Corner, Plainfield and Savoy. About 1850, Lemuel Cross and Allen Phillips commenced on the stage route from here to South Deerfield, driving quite a portion of the time a four-horse team. Their equipment was a good one, and the stage route of Cross and Phillips was very popular. They continued it for about twenty years, when they sold out to Frank Warren. E. Payson Eldredge and others had the route for a while. The opening of the trolley to Conway discontinued the through route, since which it has only been run to Conway.

The stage over the mountain was run with four horses for a time, then with two. Henry Coulliard for Joseph Bement, Merritt Stetson and Justus Smith were among the principal drivers. The stages each way started out about half past six in the morning, and returned about the same time at night.

The completion of the Troy & Greenfield Railroad to Shel-



burne Falls in 1867 opened a new avenue to Boston for both mail and passengers. A stage route was soon opened to Shelburne Falls, connecting with a mail from Buckland. John Wilde and Asa Sanderson ran the route to Shelburne Falls for several years, selling out in 1874 to William Deming. About this time a through mail route was established to Shelburne Falls, which is still continued. After the completion of the trolley to Conway it was proposed to have two mails a day from that point, but the scheme was thwarted by the friends of the Shelburne Falls stage putting in a petition for two mails a day on that route, which was granted. "Uncle Bill Deming" was the proprietor and popular driver for over thirty years, up to the time of his death. Many good stories of Uncle Bill Deming still enliven the long stage route from Shelburne Falls to Ashfield.

The post office in South Ashfield was established about 1866. Chandler Ward was the first postmaster, then Charles S. Guilford, Arthur Harris, Henry Higginbotham, and for the past seventeen years, Arthur J. Chapin. In 1888 a post office was started in Spruce Corner, and in 1898, the one in Watson. Alanson Cole, Frank H. Cook and Georges A. Thayer have been postmasters in Spruce Corner, and B. W. Anderson in Watson.

In the early days the cost of postage and the distance to a post office gave little patronage to Uncle Sam's mail department. In 1800, it cost seventeen cents to send a letter to Cape Cod, and twenty-five cents to western New York. When it was known that a person was going from Ashfield to either of these sections, or from there here, he was always made the bearer of many letters. One Nathan Crosby, "Old Crosby," as he was called, used to make frequent trips to the Cape and carry letters back and forth. He was a harmless, good natured old man, a little "daft," who charged nothing for his services, but was always welcomed and entertained at both ends of his route, as the bearer of news from the "Cape" or from the folks "up country." Money was not over plentiful, and the story comes down of the

old man who has now many descendants living with us, saying to his daughter just after she had married a man who was about to emigrate to western New York, "Well, Susy, you are going way out into York State to live; we'd like to hear from you once in a while, but don't write too often; you know it costs a good deal of money to send letters."

## CHAPTER VII

### INDUSTRIES, ETC.

The beginning of the first settlers in agriculture was to raise a little corn for subsistence and to cut a little wild hay for the small amount of stock they had on hand. Of course their stock raising progressed slowly. In 1766, over twenty years after the town was settled, we find by the census given on another page that there were in town 35 oxen, 31 cows, 17 horses, 72 swine and 188 sheep.

The lack of fences made the keeping of stock a difficult matter, hence the importance attached to the votes for field drivers and hogreeves, also whether "to let the hogs run at large this year." The record of the ear marks for the stock of the different owners is begun on the town records in 1765, and continued until 1845. In 1767 the mark for stock of Jonathan Lillie was a cross top of left ear, slit in same ear and a slit in top of right ear. 1774, Chileab Smith, crop of each ear and slit in right. Dea. John Bement, a slit under side of left ear. Kimball Howes, a half penny upper side of right ear. Ephraim Williams, a swallow tail in the end of the left ear and a sloping cross the under side of the right ear. Jasher Taylor, a hole in the left ear, and so on, no two alike.

If stock was found running at large and troublesome, the field driver or hogreeve was found, and the animal placed in the public pound, which was early provided. The ear marks were examined, the records consulted if necessary, the owner was notified and requested to "pay charges and take away" his property. These "pounds" were evidently substantial structures. In 1791 it was "Voted: To build a pound 30 feet square, 7 feet high, to have large posts set in the ground, with a plate on the top with rail mortised in said posts—the pound to be sett up back of Seth Wait's horse house." (Back of Dr. Urquhart's.)

Barnabas Howes in his history relates that Jesse Edson, who lived in the north part of the town, cut and stacked the hay on a meadow in the west part of the town, on the farm where Addison

J. Howes now lives, and in the winter drew it home on a hand sled, the distance probably four or five miles, and that Dea. John Bement, who settled on the Dr. Murray place, did the same from the Knowlton place in the Chapel neighborhood, something like one and one-half miles. The meadow on Mr. Howes' farm is still called the Edson meadow. Both Bement and Edson were here sometime before the Revolution.

In clearing up the country the settlers raised rye on their new land, adding to their corn cake rye, making "Rye and Indian" bread which was their staple article of diet. People living remember the shoveling of large loaves into the brick or stone oven with the long iron slice. Dr. Smith used to tell the story—with how much truth we trow not—of how one housewife with a large family of children used the cradle to mix up this bread in, then after the loaves were in the oven and the cradle washed, the occupant was returned to its former place.

In the "Grand Valuation List" taken in 1821, only ten of the largest farmers each raised 50 bushels of corn. These were Henry Alden, Cyrus Alden, John Bement, Samuel Elmer, Joseph Porter, Roswell Ranney, Ephraim Williams, and Jonathan Yeomans, Jr., who raised 50 bushels each, Silas Blake 60, and Timothy Catlin 70. Some of the farmers are down for a few bushels of rye, oats and wheat, no others as high as 50 bushels. Apples and potatoes are not considered of enough importance to be mentioned, but it is asked how many barrels of cider can be made from the farm, and the answers range all the way from one to sixty. Potatoes were lightly esteemed as an article of diet, and did not come into general use until several years after this when the varieties began to improve. In 1840, in an old account book, a farmer charges for ten bushels of potatoes 20 cents per bushel, and for Carter potatoes 33 1-3 cents. So little was known of the potato among the early settlers, that one man having a few bushels on hand in the spring declared he should hold them over until another year, prices were so low.

Apple orchards were started early, but there was little grafted fruit, people depending on the best kinds of common fruit for their own use and there was but little sale for apples. Rhode

Island Greenings, Blue Pearmain and Roxbury Russets were among the first varieties grafted in. The Baldwin came later. Apple Valley was early an apple section. Israel Williams, who first lived on the farm now owned by Herbert Clarke, then where William and Robert Williams live, raised a great many apples. He had a cider mill and two distilleries. His apples went into cider, and the cider into brandy. He had large vats or hogsheads in his cellar, where his cider was stored. Daniel Forbes, the veteran school teacher of ninety terms, mentioned elsewhere, lived early at the head of Apple Valley about one hundred rods below where John W. Howes now lives and did much towards bringing in new varieties of fruit. He did grafting for the people and encouraged the farmers' boys to do the work themselves and improve their orchards. He was a small man with a mild and pleasant manner. There are those living who well remember his kind saying, "You can do it yourselves, boys, just as well as I can." Posterity today is reaping the profits from the thousands of fruit trees which he and his family started and helped to cultivate.

Anson Goodwin, who lived where Albert Richmond does, was a great lover of fruits. His son, Eldad Frank, had a nursery for a time. About 1840, the best apples were drawn from here to Springfield and sold for \$2.00 a barrel.

The prices for butter and cheese varied. In a store account in 1789 between Murray and Bennett and Esq. Williams, 42 shillings is allowed for one firkin of butter weighing 84 lbs., that is—6 pence or 8 1-3 cents a pound. From this time to 1840, butter is quoted from 8 1-3 to 15 cents and cheese from 5 to 10 cents. The butter was usually sold to the country merchants who sent it to Springfield and Boston. It went to those places in wagons packed in straw (no ice) drawn by two or four horses. After the completion of the railroad to Greenfield and Shelburne Falls, the farmers packed their butter in five and ten pound boxes, with their initials on the box and left them with the different merchants, to be sent to commission houses in Boston, getting their returns once in two weeks. The butter was sold on its merits, although it was claimed there were ex-

ceptional cases to this. A farmer carried in his butter to the merchant or shipping agent one week with his boxes marked as usual with the exception of one box which was marked D. P. The agent asked what that meant. The farmer said it meant Darned Poor, that his wife had poor luck with that batch and he dare not put on his own initials. When the returns came back, the D. P. butter was marked higher than his regular stamp. At first, the farmers received from 20 to 30 cents, but during the last years of the war it went as high as 50 and 60 cents. This practice was continued into the eighties when creameries began to be established.

The "Grand Valuation" taken by the assessors in 1821, may not present the true situation of agriculture at that time. The official census taken in 1845, certainly gives a much more encouraging view, although the population was smaller. That gives for this town: Number of Horses 188, Value \$5,640; Neat Cattle 1,457, \$15,550; Swine 244, \$488; Sheep 7,667, \$12,000; Bushels of Corn 6,253, \$4,689; Wheat 881, \$881; Rye 470, \$352; Oats 2,241, \$318; Potatoes 23,452, \$3,908; Bushels of Apples 6,284, \$1,047; Pounds Butter 49,045, \$4,904; Cheese 30,846, \$1,388; Maple Sugar, 59,981, \$3,598; Pounds Wool, 21,402, \$7,515.

#### OLD MILLS AND VARIOUS INDUSTRIES

The contract with the proprietors and Chileab Smith for building the first corn mill in 1743 is still in existence. It was to be built on "pond brook," where in the deep glen at the foot of Mill Hill its foundations and one of the old millstones may still be seen. Others of the millstones have been drawn up to the cemetery and may be seen on the border of Mrs. Henry Hall's lot. This mill was in existence until about 1832. Twenty years ago people were living who remembered going there on horseback from distant parts of the town with grain to grind. Lewis Foster was one of the later millers. It is said the following verse was posted in his mill:

"I would have you know  
It is a good thing  
To mend well your bags  
And keep a good string."



Mr. Ranney has noted that Mr. Anson Goodwin told him he remembered when there was quite a collection of houses in the hollow below where the Whitney summer bungalow now is. The main road from Baptist Corner south passed through here.

As has been noted, the first sawmill was built just below Bear River bridge. It seems that the corn mill on Pond Brook was not satisfactory and needed frequent repairs. In 1752, Chileab Smith is directed by Proprietors' vote to put the grist mill in order at once and have charge of it for one year. In 1762, from the records it seems that Mr. Smith had built a new corn mill below the sawmill, so near to it that the pondage injured the sawmill, whereupon it was voted that "The said Chileab Smith be ordered and directed to remove his corn mill as he would avoid what may ensue upon his failure hereof." Uncle Chileab, with his usual adroitness, got out of the difficulty by buying the sawmill. The foundation of each of these mills can still be seen, and one of the millstones marks the site of the Phillips and Ellis fort. A number of years after, there was a saw and shingle mill a little further up stream, run first by the Flowers and later by the Phillipses. Still higher up stream, just below the "Factory Bridge," was a woolen factory which about 1830 was moved three-fourths of a mile northward and converted into the two-story dwelling house now owned by Dana L. Graves, formerly by Roswell L. Church.

At the upper end of the village, just below where Anton Dige lives, was a tannery and shop owned by Asa and L. C. Sanderson which was carried away by the freshet of 1878. Below, just back of the hotel, was a factory where Col. Nehemiah Hathaway made axes in the thirties and was succeeded by Allen Phillips in the same business. Then for a number of years Nelson Gardner had a wood-working factory there, then A. D. Flower bought it for a grist mill and did a good business until the freshet swept this also away.

It is believed that Jacob Gardner built the first sawmill in South Ashfield. A grist mill and rake factory were afterwards added with which Bela Gardner, son of Jacob, had considerable to do. Afterwards both passed through various hands. John

Sprague rebuilt the sawmill in a thorough manner, then it was run by Levi Gardner and son for a number of years until after the death of Mr. Gardner it passed into the hands of C. A. Bronson and others and finally burned down in the winter of 1910.

The grist mill at the South Ashfield village did a flourishing business for about fifty years and was run by Bela Gardner, John Ward, Julius Fuller, Zachariah Howes and son, and others. It was badly damaged by the freshet in 1878, and in 1879 was bought by A. D. Flower and the works were moved to his new mill on the Plain, now operated by Geo. W. Cook & Co.

At an early date there was a saw and grist mill where Blakeslie's mill now is. In the twenties it was taxed to Horatio Bartlett, also to Roswell Ranney. On Esq. Williams' map of the survey of the town in 1795 a sawmill is located here. Abner Kelley probably bought of Bartlett and had a saw and broom handle mill here for some time. In the forties there was a plane shop here which employed quite a number of hands. The business was afterwards moved to Conway, then to Greenfield. Jasper Bement built the mill now occupied by Walter Guilford for a carding and fulling mill. Elijah and Henry Field afterwards did carding and fulling business here quite a number of years. Samuel Barber had a tannery just back of where Mrs. C. F. Howes now lives and Joseph and Henry Barber had wood working and other shops above the village. Dorus Graves had a carding and fulling mill above the bridge, below Clarence Guilford's, for more than forty years. Towards the head of the west stream, George Stocking had a tannery where the creamery now is. On what are now insignificant streams, mills were made to do quite a business a hundred years ago. There were two sawmills owned by the Blakes and others just below the Ludwig place, and Joshua Knowlton and Alvan Clark (father of the telescope maker) had a grist mill just below Chapel Falls.

In 1769, the Proprietors voted to give Jonathan Taylor and Daniel Williams encouragement to build sawmills. Jonathan built his mill below the "Taylor Corners" southwest from where Fred Kelley lives.

Daniel Williams, who married a daughter of Capt. Ephraim Hunt, was prospecting for his son Ephraim, who brought up his mill irons from Easton, and built a mill in the forest at Spruce Corner at the corner where the road turns to Watson. This mill remained in the Williams family until destroyed by the freshet in 1878. The mill now run by George Thayer was formerly owned by Amasa Holbrook and Nelson Gardner. There was a sawmill for many years just above the bridge about forty rods west of the Benjamin Dyer place near Plainfield line. Asa Guilford early built a mill northeast of Edgar Lesure's. Another was built on the same site in 1868 by Oscar Lilly and Elisha Howes, which was sold afterwards to William Ford and burned about fifteen years since. In the forties, Asa Guilford built and run a steam mill just back of where Benjamin Anderson lives. For a good many years there was a sawmill half a mile west, owned last by Wells Porter.

About 1835, a mill built by Jonathan Lillie which stood some twenty rods north of the Water Company's reservoir above the Sullivan place burned down, but another one was soon built about seventy-five rods below on the Northwest road. This was operated until about 1850 by Elijah Howes, then sold to David S. Howes. At quite an early date, Alexander Ward owned a sawmill at Howesville, and about 1840 Jonathan Howes built another near the present bridge at the lower end of the state road. This mill and the Dyer mill at Spruce Corner were both built before 1795. A saw and shingle mill owned by Daniel Miles and Bethuel Lilly was on the brook east of Fred Lilly's, and a sawmill owned by Sears and Eldredge west of Cape Street, also a wood-working mill on the cross road from Cape Street to Lythia owned by the Seldens and Parkers.

With the old up-and-down saws 1500 or 2000 feet a day was called a big day's work. Two dollars a thousand was had for sawing, and in 1845 hemlock lumber sold for \$5 or \$6 per thousand. Darius Williams probably put in the first circular saw for sawing boards.

We have now but little idea of the timber growing in our primeval forests. Only about sixty years ago four sticks of

spruce timber eighty feet long, squaring one foot at the top, were cut from a single lot in the west part of the town (Watson). These were for the tower of the Baptist church at Shelburne Falls, where they may still be seen. Thousands of broom handles were drawn "down the river" and sold for a cent apiece, sometimes less. Rolling pins, meat mauls, lather boxes, butter paddles, faucets of all sizes and other articles were made in the wood-working mills. The manufacture of wooden splints for use in limb fractures was carried on in a small way by both Henry S. Smith and Heman S. Day. It is claimed that Mr. Smith invented a device which was an improvement and made his splints quite popular.

Sixty years ago there was a manufactory of pottery in South Ashfield which did quite a business.

Shirts, linen bosoms, collars and skirt supporters were "put out" by Selden & Perkins and Bement and Belding for the women of the town to make. The census of 1845 gives \$12,000 worth of linen bosoms and collars made in one year, and \$3,000 worth of braided palm leaf hats. The women of those days certainly earned their "pin money."

A letter on the products of Ashfield in 1824 gives the value of peppermint oil made as over \$40,000 yearly.

Before 1800, the Bennetts made wool hats on the Plain and there were others in the same business between that time and 1821.

At an early date sand paper was made in Apple Valley where Will Willis now lives, getting the sand from the bank opposite.

Besides those industries that have been mentioned there were several small tanneries and many shoemakers and "cord-wainers" named in old records, scattered about town.

In 1878, Ellsworth & Bradford started a cheese factory on the Kimball Howes place now occupied by Wm. H. Howes in Watson, taking the milk produced in that part of the town. After running one season the enterprise was abandoned.

In 1880, the Ashfield Coöperative Creamery Association was formed, which has had a good degree of prosperity. Some \$5,000 has been expended on its plant and the present output of butter

is about 150,000 pounds a year. A. D. Flower was the first President, succeeded by Walter G. Lesure until 1895, and by Sanford H. Boice since that time. Charles A. Hall was the first secretary and treasurer, then C. H. Wilcox, A. D. Flower, and John M. Sears since 1895. D. B. Dunham, Geo. G. Henry and W. R. Hunter have been superintendents and butter makers.

Thayer & Harmon started the manufacture of wooden handles and so forth on "Centre Hill" about ten years ago and by industry and square dealing have built up quite a business. They use from 200,000 to 300,000 feet of lumber and their yearly output of goods is some \$15,000 worth.

George Thayer of Spruce Corner also does something in the wood-working line and last year made 18,000 apple barrels, selling for about \$6,000.

#### STORES

With the data in our possession it would be a difficult matter to mention all the stores that have existed in town. Gad Wait had a store here at an early date. Capt. Selah Norton evidently built a house and opened a store on the corner where Mrs. Rosa Ranney now lives, in 1793. The Bennetts also had a store and hat shop in Ashfield about that time. Abraham and David White bought of Zachariah Field in 1808 the building now owned by Alvah Howes and had a store there until 1816 when they sold out to John Williams, Jr., from Goshen. Mr. Williams did a large business. He had also a "Potash," located just back of where Dr. Fessenden's office now is, where he manufactured the article. He used to send a team to the outlying towns and gather up the ashes, paying for them from a few goods carried in his wagon, sometimes going as far as Savoy. He kept up the potash business until about 1840. One of the large kettles used in its manufacture is now in the possession of Mr. William Gray. It measures about four feet in diameter across the top. Mr. Williams sold the building about 1838, and opened a store in the rear of the house where Mrs. Alvan Hall now resides.

Selah Norton sold out his store in 1815, and it was owned by various parties until 1826, when it was bought by Samuel W. Hall who was a prosperous trader there for over twenty-five years.



About 1830, Alvan Hall occupied and probably built a large store five or six rods north of the Alvah Howes house. Jasper Bement afterwards bought the store and from here large numbers of Ashfield peddlers were fitted out with their trunk of Yankee notions and basket of essences. Later it was moved to its present location (the Rice meat market) where Joseph Bement, son of Jasper, continued in the same business. Moses Cook succeeded him, then Flower Brothers, afterwards Church & Wait, then Asa G. Wait who sold to Henry Higginbotham & Co. in 1905, the last occupants as merchants. They sold the building to Rice Brothers in 1908.

The building on the other corner, opposite the Episcopal church, was also quite a trading place. John Hart had a store there in the thirties, Cook & Ranney from 1842 to 1847. Later, Hall & Ranney, also Alvan Perry, traded in the same place. Josephus Crafts had a store in town as early as 1835 and was succeeded by his brother, Albert W., in 1847, who still remains on the same corner in a store much enlarged and improved under the firm name of A. W. Crafts & Sons.

Almon Bronson built the store now occupied by Mr. Henry in 1858 and continued in trade there until about 1878, when on account of poor health he sold to his brother, Chester A. Bronson, who sold to Samuel T. Mather in 1887, who sold to George Henry in 1910.

In the twenties, a man named Cooley had a store in South Ashfield, followed by Major Dana, Charles Reed, Gardner & Guilford. About 1853 a coöperative store was established there conducted by Foster R. King. Afterward came Chandler A. Ward, then Henry Higginbotham who sold to Arthur A. Chapin, the present occupant. Mr. Orcutt of Conway had a store there for a time. A. O. & T. L. Perkins had a store on the opposite corner, occupied later by Perkins & Selden who used to "put out" linen collars for the ladies to make. James Barrus had a store there for a short time which was burned in the spring of 1893.

Besides those mentioned, there were others in town whose names appear in the advertisements of the *Hampshire Gazette*.



There were small stores in different parts of the town. One was in Spruce Corner. Captain Warner had one in Steady Lane and Mr. George Howes notes that there was a store in Watson, across the road from where W. E. Ford now lives, kept by Jonah Fuller.

Prices charged in John Williams' account book from 1816 to 1820:  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. tea, 71 cts. 2 qts. rum, 67 cts. 1 mug sling, 25 cts.  $\frac{1}{2}$  yd. cambrick, 60 cts. 2 lbs. sugar, 60 cts. 2 lbs. raisins, 40 cts. 1 lb. nails, 17 cts. 1 handkerchief, \$1.17. 1 warming pan, \$3.21. 1 paper pins, 20 cts. 1 peck coarse salt, 38 cts. 4 pairs black cotton stockings, \$4.50. 1 gal. molasses, \$1.20.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mug sling, 37 cts. To transport of 165 lbs. from Boston at \$1.25 per cwt., \$2.06. 6 yds. calico, \$2.88. Brandy and egg, 13 cts.

Farmers were credited for cheese 8 to 10 cts., butter 10 to 20 cts., oats 50 cts., rye \$1.00, beef  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cts., turkeys, 6 cts.

#### TAVERNS

The first house of public entertainment in the town is believed to have been kept by Joseph Mitchell, as early as 1763, on the east side of Bellows Hill, above the Jesse Hall place in Belden-ville. The first precinct meetings of Ashfield were held there. There is a tradition believed to be true, that the old Dea. Ziba Smith house north of Asa Wait's is the Mitchell tavern removed to that spot. Timothy Perkins had one on the Plain on or near the site of the present hotel in 1773, and perhaps earlier. Capt. Moses Fuller kept one in a two-story house which stood nearly on the site of the house now owned by Mrs. Curtis as early as 1767, and probably until his death in 1794. Captain Fuller owned considerable land about the village. A tavern was kept where Dr. Urquhart now resides, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, by Seth Wait. Zachariah Field built the house—or a part of it—now occupied by Alvah W. Howes, in 1792, and kept a tavern and store there until 1808. He was then succeeded by A. and D. White, who had a store in the same building. John Williams followed next, in the same place and business, in the year 1816, and was succeeded by Harrison Foote, about the year 1838, who kept it until about 1846. Others have been kept

in different sections of the town. Chileab Smith is said to have kept one north of Asa Wait's, and there was one for a time on the east side of Ridge Hill near Walter Lesure's pasture on the old road to Buckland. There was one in Spruce Corner kept by Asa Newton, afterwards by the Bonds. About 1820, Whiting Kellogg had one in South Ashfield,—in the house formerly owned by Nathan Sears. Russell Bement had one where Henry Pease now lives. George Barrus kept a tavern in the house now owned by Walter Shaw, from about 1820 to 1838. There was a hall in the upper story where dances, singing schools, etc., were held. Ezra Williams had a tavern in the northwest part of the town for about twenty-five years, which was quite a popular resort. The building was last owned by T. P. Smith, and burned in 1896.

Lyman Cross opened a tavern in 1830 where Mr. Porter's hotel now is. He was by trade a cooper, and for a time served the public with good tubs and firkins as well as lodging and entertainment. Back in the thirties and before, there was a good deal of travel. One of the stage lines was from Albany to Boston; and farm produce going in and supplies coming out made lively business on the main highways. Mr. Zebulon B. Taylor said that he remembered when a boy of counting twenty loads of pork in one day passing through the northwest part of the town on the way to Boston. All this made stirring times for the hotels, which were well patronized. The Cross Hotel won a good name which it has always retained.

Professor Norton in an account of his first visit to Ashfield speaks of alighting at "the modest little hotel where we partook of an excellent dinner."

The hall in the second story was occupied for balls, small court hearings, etc. "The Know Nothings" at first held their meetings there. Mr. Cross retired and sold to his son Lemuel in 1859 who conducted it until about 1868, when Allen Phillips, who had married a daughter of Mr. Cross, bought and run the hotel until about 1880, when he sold to Henry Coulliard who sold it to the present proprietor, Lewis Porter, in 1882. With the increasing popularity of Ashfield as a summer resort,

Mr. Porter finding his quarters too small to meet the public demand, in 1889 enlarged his house to nearly its present capacity.

## ASHFIELD ADVERTISEMENTS IN HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

In 1793, Selah Norton advertises "all sorts of dry goods, also Old Jamaica Spirits, New England Rum, French Brandy &c. Will pay 8 pence per pound for butter, part cash."

Selah Norton had a store for many years in the house where Mrs. Rosa Ranney now lives.

July 2, 1793. The partnership of Murray and Bennett is this day mutually dissolved. All persons indebted to said Partnership are desired to settle their accounts with the said Murray only who will attend said business on the 15th, 16th and 30th of July and the 13th and 20th of August at his store in Ashfield. Those who do not comply with this invitation will be at the expense of going out of town and settling with an Attorney.

Murray & Bennett.

It is thought this store was at South Ashfield near where Charles Day's shop is.

In 1813, Enos Pomeroy of Buckland calls on his customers in Ashfield and Buckland "to call and settle the 1st of Oct. or you may be expected to be called upon in a more disagreeable way."

In 1803, "Dorus Graves of Ashfield still carries on the clothier's business as usual. All commands in that line will be faithfully attended to." His shop was by the bridge just below where the road turns up towards Mrs. Underhill's place.

April, 1804, "Heman Graves has lately set up the Hatting business in Ashfield. He has a quantity of Hatts of all kinds which he offers for sale on the lowest terms for cash or most kinds of country produce."

Merchants seem to multiply in town, for in 1805 Joshua Phillips advertises dry goods and so forth, and Windsor Smith and Samuel D. Ward advertise a new store.

In 1803, Zachariah Field advertises "large house, store and 1 acre of land." This was the Ranney block, where Alvah Howes now lives.

In August, 1804, D. and A. White advertise for "their stores in Ashfield and Buckland." They had bought the Field property.

In 1805, Dorus Graves warns his patrons if they don't call and settle he will make them do it in a way not agreeable.

In 1806, Eliakim Lilly and Jonathan Lilly, Jr., delivered *Hampshire Gazettes* to subscribers.

In 1811, Dorus Graves advertises new works. "All kinds of produce taken in payment."

#### Proclamation

To the men of Hatfield, Whately, Conway, Ashfield, Plainfield and Cummington, who are indebted to me for the Hampshire Gazette. For 12 months you have seen me laboring for you through heat and cold to furnish you with the news of all nations, therefore I invite every one of you to pay me immediately. Come on then in companies, half companies and singly; and I will receive what is due me with grateful heart. It is in your power to retrieve the debt I have contracted in your behalf that I may carry on my business with pleasure.

Josiah Shaw.

In 1827, S. W. Hall advertises store in Ashfield, also J. C. Baldwin & Co. and John Williams, Mr. Hall's store in Mrs. Ranney's house, Mr. Williams' in Ranney block.

#### THE ASHFIELD INSURANCE COMPANY

The Ashfield Mutual Fire Insurance Company was first organized in 1854, but was not incorporated under Massachusetts laws until 1873. Its rates were low, being one-fourth of one per cent. and a 3 per cent. premium note; this up to 1876, when the cash premium was raised to one-half of one per cent. If a man was insured for \$1,000 he paid in \$5 cash and gave a note for \$30. At the legal organization of the company, over \$57,000 of insurance was pledged, mainly the best risks of the town. Under the old organization and up to 1876 there were very few fires and the insurance had cost the patrons but little. But soon the company met with the following losses:

May 20, 1875, David Vincent's buildings were burned, loss \$600; June 21, 1877, Joshua Hall's barn and contents, loss about \$500; July 25, 1877, Joseph Keach's buildings, loss \$540; July, 1878, the barn of Ruel Pease was burned by lightning, loss to the company about \$1,500.

These losses made an assessment necessary, which had a dispiriting effect upon the company. Before the assessment, the amount of property insured had been over \$100,000, but at the close of 1879 by the expiration and surrendering of policies it was reduced to \$35,488. The company slowly rallied, its old friends remaining loyal. In 1884, there was over \$45,000 insurance and at the close of 1896, \$55,089 of risks with \$657.20 in cash and \$1,681 in premium notes. In 1895, John Spath had been paid \$495 for a loss, and in the winter of 1897, \$600 was paid G. Stanley Hall for the loss of his house by fire, leaving only \$57.20 cash assets for the company. A late act of the legislature and the opinion of the Insurance Commissioner caused the following record in the secretary's book:

The directors of the Ashfield Mutual Fire Insurance Co. met on call of the Secretary and voted to cancel all existing policies, and to make a dividend of the assets among the policy holders.

This was done by reason of adverse legislation, a law having been passed requiring all fire insurance companies to possess an amount of capital which our company did not have and could not raise. It imposed a penalty on the company for each policy issued and made the directors personally liable in case of loss.

The company was in existence over forty years, paid all its losses promptly and its officers served faithfully without salary. H. S. Ranney and Charles Howes as Presidents, Levi Gardner as Treasurer, with Almon E. Bronson and Asa G. Wait as Secretaries were the principal officers. The company served its patrons well, for even with the assessments the cost of insurance was not very heavy for those who remained. But it was never a very substantial company. Mrs. Curtis' buildings were insured for \$2,000 and had the company remained the same financially it would have been made bankrupt by this loss.

## FIRES

Besides those mentioned in the sketch of the local insurance company some of the fires have been as follows: In 1828, the house of Nathan Wood, which stood where the Ludwig cottage now is on Briar Hill, was burned. About 1835, a sawmill near the water company's upper reservoir. About 1874, Merritt Jenkins' buildings in New Boston, nearly opposite where Fred. Lilly now lives. In 1885, the Darius Williams' buildings in Spruce Corner. In 1887, dwelling of Ezra Howes in Spruce Corner, loss \$625, insured for \$500. In 1888, the shop of C. H. Day in South Ashfield, loss about \$600, no insurance. October 11, 1889, Murray J. Guilford, house, barn and contents, loss estimated about \$4,000, insurance received \$2,300. 1892, sawmill and contents belonging to W. E. Ford, loss \$2,000, no insurance. April, 1893, James L. Barrus' store at South Ashfield. November 16, 1893, house, barn and contents owned by James L. Barrus, loss estimated \$3,500, insurance received \$2,440. 1901, house, barn and contents belonging to Mrs. G. W. Curtis; this was the only fire of any importance in the village for over a hundred years. In 1910, house and furniture of Mrs. E. P. Williams, loss \$3,000, insurance \$1,600.

## ASHFIELD WATER COMPANY

The Ashfield Water Company was formed in 1893. About \$15,000 was raised of which Mr. M. M. Belding took about one-third the stock, while Mrs. Curtis, Professor Norton and Mr. Farragut subscribed liberally, citizens of the village contributing smaller sums. Different sites for a water supply were examined, until finally, with the advice of the State Board of Health, the brook on the Watson road was chosen as a source of supply, the distance being over two miles. The work was finished the next season and water brought to the village. The system has a fall of over two hundred feet and a pressure of one hundred and eight pounds to the square inch, giving excellent fire protection to the village and a good supply of pure water to those families who choose to avail themselves of it. Lest the supply might at some time become short, in 1909 the old mill pond consisting of about one and three-fourths acres was thoroughly cleansed of



old vegetable matter and a cement dam built, making an excellent reservoir. The company is well organized, with A. D. Daniels President and C. H. Wilder Secretary. The Ashfield Fire and Hose Company has well equipped apparatus with eight hundred feet of hose ready for use and a snug little building for storage purposes and office use. W. J. Van Ness is chief and A. W. Crafts, Jr., secretary and treasurer.

#### RAILROAD ASPIRATIONS

In 1848, Samuel W. Hall, then a representative in the legislature, in a letter to his son Henry speaks of the agitation for a railroad route and wants an expression of the feeling in Ashfield in regard to it. In March, 1849, it was voted that "Sanford Boice and William Bassett be a committee to petition the Legislature to allow the Troy and Greenfield R. R. to amend their charter so as to include Ashfield and Plainfield in their route."

A survey was made that season, entering the town from Conway near where Sanford Boice now lives, up the stream just north of the village, thence westerly by the Bassett Four Corners and near the Sullivan place through the Northwest district into the towns of Hawley and Savoy, thence to North Adams. Hopes ran high that ere long smoking locomotives with long trains of cars would soon be running through the town. But they were doomed to disappointment, for it was found that while the grade up the eastern incline was no greater than some on the Boston & Albany road, the descent from the summit of the watershed in Savoy down to North Adams was so heavy as to render the route impracticable. In his letter, Mr. Hall speaks of favoring the route "nature made." It was finally decided that this was up the Deerfield Valley, provided that man would bore the Hoosac Mountain.

At a meeting held November 5, 1867, it was "Voted to raise \$1000 to cause a survey to be made for a Railroad connecting with the North Adams and Williamsburg road at a point between Skinnerville and Cummington to a point on the Troy and Greenfield Railroad, near the mouth of Bear River in Conway, or between Shelburne Falls and the mouth of South River."

The main route contemplated was to come into town from Williamsburg by South Ashfield and then through "Pogue's Hole" just west of Mt. Owen and follow Bear River Valley down to the Troy and Greenfield Railroad. Another route was to leave the contemplated railroad at Goshen, come through Cape Street to the village, then by Buckland to Shelburne Falls.

A note inserted below the record of the vote says, "It was found the vote was not binding so a tax was not assessed." The Skinnerville, Cummington and North Adams railroad got no farther than Williamsburg.

To get from Ashfield to Shelburne Falls it was proposed to pass out through the valley by Charles Richmond's, then wind around the westerly side of Ridge Hill by an easy descent, reaching the valley about two miles this side of Shelburne Falls.

The town was first put in electric communication with the world in 1883, the telegraph being completed to Ashfield that year.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SURVEYS OF THE TOWN—GENERAL TOPOGRAPHY, ETC.

There have been two surveys of the town made by vote, the first in 1794 by Esq. Williams and Roland Sears, a committee chosen for that purpose. A plan of this survey was carefully preserved by Mr. Ranney. In May, 1830, it was voted "To choose a committee to take a survey of the town, or hire it done by the day or job as they think proper." This survey was made by Levi Leonard and a plan made two feet square, giving boundaries, streams, roads, schoolhouses, mills and so on. This plan was found a few years ago at Isaac Bassett's, among the papers of his grandfather, Henry Bassett, Esq. By request of Mr. Bowker, County Register of Deeds, it was sent to his office, where a blue print copy was taken to go on file there, and through the courtesy of Mr. Bowker a few extra copies were sent with the original back to Ashfield, where they may be seen at the clerk's office. The first survey reads, "Pursuant to an act of the General Court passed June, 1794, the following is a Plan of Ashfield taken in Nov. 1794, and in May 1795. The distance from the State House in Boston to the Centre of Ashfield is computed at 120 miles and from the Court House in Northampton at 18 miles.

E. Williams	Committee
	of
R. Sears	Ashfield."

The plan of the second survey reads as follows: "Ashfield, Dec. 21, 1830. This town is plotted by a scale of 100 rods to an inch. It is 110 miles from Boston and 17 miles from Greenfield this town is hilly, the highest is 40 rods, between the roads are hills

Levi Leonard surveyor"

As the boundary lines of the town are important, and as these are the only full surveys ever made since the configuration of the town about 1765, it may be well to record them here. It is evident that Esq. Williams allowed more for "sag of chain," as his

distances are generally shorter. With the exception of the Goshen boundary, the lines run in 1794 were the same as in 1830, and as now existing.

Beginning at the southeast corner of the town, at a point where there is now a light gray stone that stands in a pasture on the side hill about forty rods westerly from the road to Williamsburg, and in sight from the road, they ran the Conway line as follows:

Esq. Williams, North  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  East 2163 rods,

Mr. Leonard, North  $20^{\circ}$  East, 2220 rods,

to the northeast corner of the town, now marked by a black stone standing on the south side of the road about one hundred rods beyond Sidney P. Elmer's house. Then turning to the westward on the line next to Conway and Buckland, they made

Esq. Williams, West  $15\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  North, 643 rods,

Mr. Leonard,  $17^{\circ}$  North, 674 rods,

to a corner now marked by a stone about sixty rods north of the Higgins Brothers' house, and a short distance below their new road. Then following on Buckland and Hawley line,

Esq. Williams, West  $4\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  South 1614 rods,

Mr. Leonard, West  $3^{\circ}$  South 1727 rods,

to the northwest corner of the town, about half a mile south of the Hawley church where is now a stone monument beside the road marked "Ashfield Corner." Then turning southerly on Hawley and Plainfield line,

Esq. Williams, South  $6\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  West 514 rods,

Mr. Leonard, South  $6^{\circ}$  West 529 rods,

to a point where is now a stone in the woods south of the Campbell & Bissell saw mill, then

Esq. Williams, South  $11\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  East 127 rods,

Mr. Leonard, South 122 rods,

to a stone in a swamp, then

Esq. Williams, East  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  South 83 rods,

Mr. Leonard, East  $19^{\circ}$  South 85 rods,

to a stone about six rods west of the brook, then

Esq. Williams, South  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  West 383 rods,

Mr. Leonard, South  $19^{\circ}$  West 401 rods,

to a point westerly of the Leander Hill place. From here to Ashfield southwest corner the line was called by

Esq. Williams, South  $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  East 489 rods,

Mr. Leonard, South  $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  East 517 rods,

this to the corner in Cummington line.

The line from this corner to the place of beginning is of course next to Cummington and Goshen and was run out by the committee at this time, but it seems that it was not satisfactory, for the matter coming up in town meeting in 1796, it was voted to make the boundary next to Goshen a straight line from the southeast corner of Ashfield to Cummington corner. But it seems that this did not satisfy, for in 1797 at a meeting in January, Ephraim Williams was chosen a committee "to settle the line between this town and Goshen." It appears that the matter was not so easily settled, for after a good deal of discussion and bickering, it was left to three referees, each from outside the two towns. The line decided upon, as given in the Leonard plan of 1830, is as follows: Beginning at the southwest corner of the town and running East  $22\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  South 295 rods to Cummington corner, then on same course 410 rods to a stone in "Cushman's meadow" westerly of Willis Sears' house, then North  $12^{\circ}$  East 14 rods, then East  $20\frac{1}{3}^{\circ}$  South 980 rods to a stone in the southerly part of Briar Hill, then South  $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  West 28 rods, then East  $22^{\circ}$  South 167 rods to the southeast corner of the town.

It will be seen that with the exception of the two jogs, one of fourteen, the other of twenty-eight rods, this is a straight line. Why these jogs were made, we cannot learn with certainty. The fact that some of the Ashfield lots had been laid over the line into the town of Goshen may have had something to do with it. It seems that Ashfield was not satisfied with the line established, for an effort was made to have the decision of the referees set aside by the court, this town evidently preferring the straight line.

All the thirteen corners of the town are marked by stone monuments, required by law to be four feet high, and the selectmen are obliged to "perambulate" the lines once in five years and see that these monuments are intact. In 1859, the monument in the north part of the town was missing, and after a search, was found by the aid of a compass, lying on the ground thickly covered with decayed leaves, having probably been undisturbed for a dozen years or more.

The question is raised by Mr. Barnabas Howes whether Mary Lyon was not born in Ashfield. Mary Lyon was born February

28, 1797. The Ashfield line was surveyed by the Esq. Williams committee two years before, and leaves the Mary Lyon place about half a mile north of the line in the town of Buckland. It is true, as Mr. Howes observes, that in the second division of lots in 1761, a portion of lot No. 46 (not 26) was laid over into the town of Buckland very near to the Mary Lyon place, as can be seen by the plan, but soon afterwards those who drew this lot and a few others were allowed land in other sections to reimburse them. If we cannot claim Ashfield as the birthplace of Miss Lyon, we are certainly entitled to the credit of giving her a good part of her education.

The northwest corner of Conway next to Ashfield is on the side hill about half a mile north of Sidney P. Elmer's house. The southeast corner of Hawley is on the northeast corner of the woods on Ashfield line about one-fourth of a mile west of the Sears or Dr. May place. The Buckland line runs through a corner of the Wood house at Buckland Four Corners. The Conway line passes directly through the summit of Mt. Owen. Ashfield is located Longitude  $70^{\circ} 50'$  West from Greenwich, the line passing north and south near the houses of J. W. Howes, A. J. Howes, and Harry Shippee. It is  $42\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  North Latitude, the one-half degree line passing near Wells Taylor's, C. Benjamin Sears', the Town Farm and George Chapin's. According to a topographical survey of the town in 1885 the height of the village above the level of the sea is 1,240 feet. The highest land in town is Peter Hill, 1,840 feet; the lowest land at Buckland Four Corners, 700 feet; at the house of Jerome Kendrick, 740 feet; at the house of Willis Burnett at Conway line about the same. The height of Spruce Corner bridge is 1,330 feet, of Watson schoolhouse 1,540. Some of the highest houses in town are J. R. Smith house at the Ezra Williams Corner, 1,740 feet; Addison J. Howes, 1,720; E. Wing, 1,730; Henry Taylor, 1,600; Alvan Cross, about 1,500.

The elevation of the hill east of C. Benjamin Sears' is 1,776 feet, hence its name, "Seventy-Six." South Ashfield village is placed at 1,000.

The view from Peter Hill on a clear day well repays a visit. To the southwest the eye meets first the Cape Street hill "Sev-



enty-Six," and More's Hill in Goshen, then farther two conical peaks in Blandford and Chester, also with a glass the villages of Chesterfield, Worthington, Chester and the Highland Fair Ground buildings in Middlefield. A little more to the west may be seen the birthplace of William Cullen Bryant, a little more to the right French Hill in Peru, also the church there. Farther towards the northwest comes Greylock Mountain, 3,600 feet high, the highest in the state; a little to the right, Parker's Hill in Hawley, the highest land in the county; beyond, the Hoosac Range over the Hoosac Tunnel; then to the north, Adams Mountain in Rowe near the Davis mine; farther on, in the state of Vermont, Haystack Mountain just west of Wilmington; just beyond that slightly to the right, Stratton Mountain. Then the eye sweeping over Mt. Pocumtuck in Heath, also Colrain, the hills in Halifax, Vermont, and Buckland Valley, we come to Mt. Massanut in Shelburne with its new Merrill tower. Beyond that, nearly in the same direction comes Mt. Grace in Warwick, and still further on in southern New Hampshire looms up grand old Monadnock. On a clear day the hotel or half-way house this side of the mountain can be plainly seen, also probably Kearsarge Mountain, north of Monadnock. To the east can be seen the Montague Plain with the smoke of the engines coming out of Miller's Falls on the Fitchburg road or turning south on the New London road. Deerfield Mountain stretches from north to south beyond Deerfield, terminating with Sugar Loaf, while just beyond is Mt. Toby. In the east, sixty miles away, is the rounded top of Wachusett.

The east end of the Holyoke Range can be seen in the south-east, but Mts. Holyoke and Tom are hidden by "High Ridge" in Williamsburg. Dr. G. Stanley Hall is very much attached to Peter Hill and is sure to make it one or more visits every time he is in town. He has bought the pasture on the west side reaching to the summit, while Professor Norton owned the east side to the summit.

The hill can be reached easily on foot by those who are good climbers with "good wind." Some twenty years ago, Dr. Hall made the trip from the hotel to the top and back in forty minutes.

Ashfield is described in a magazine article as a "town with fine drives full of pleasant surprises." A favorite drive is from the village up past the Sullivan place and "Little Switzerland," on the Watson road past the reservoir through "Bear Swamp," then, turning to the left, return over "Bug Hill" just before sunset. Of one of the views on this drive, Mr. Curtis said in one of his October lectures here, "The Vale of Tempe in all its beauty was not fairer than the Buckland Valley is today."

Another good trip is over Briar Hill, around past Chapel Falls and home through South Ashfield.

A place little known, but worthy of a visit for those who like a novelty and a good tramp, is the Old Bear's den in the pasture of Williams and Bates. Materials for a light should be carried that the cave may be explored.

The story of the origin of the name "Peter Hill" may as well be told here.

Peter Guinea, or Peter Wells was born in Guinea, Africa, and taken by a slave trader from there when about seven years old. He was held a slave in Connecticut and belonged to Dr. Bartlett's father. He married "Sue." At that time, slaves were uncertain property. Peter asked Sue's master what he would take for her. The master says, "You can take her and pay me what you are a mind to, something to answer the law." Peter took her and paid two coppers. In a short time they ran away and followed Dr. Bartlett to Ashfield. They lived in a cabin where Chester Bronson's house now stands. Sue was a good cook and a great scold. She would say of Peter, "Poor cretur, without a head." When soundly berated, Peter would sometimes say, "I didn't give but two coppers for ye, and ye ain't wuth that." Sue did service for her neighbors, raised nice garden seeds to give them, and made gingerbread for public occasions. Uncle Alvan Hall, when nearly a centenarian, used to say, "I've eaten Sue's gingerbread at trainings, and I tell you it was good, too." Peter tilled the lot on the hill which afterwards bore his name and lived a simple, honest life. One fall, hay being scarce, Esq. White advised him to sell his steers; so he proposed to Dr. Smith to buy them. On being asked the

price he said, "Esq. White says they are worth \$60, but thinks I'd better sell 'em for \$50 than keep 'em." The doctor got the steers for \$50.

When Peter was old, he became a town charge and was taken care of for a number of years by George Stocking's father who took his hill lot in payment. This lot was sold by Mr. Stocking to Jehiel Perkins who called it his "Peter," hence the name, "Peter Hill." Afterwards, Peter lived with Israel Williams, who had charge of the town poor, living where W. S. Williams does. Here, deeply bowed with his 95 years and troubled life, he died and was buried as noted elsewhere in the lone Northwest cemetery.

In the extreme southwest corner of the hill cemetery in a cluster of unmarked graves, lie his family. Only one small stone shows their resting place, this of a daughter, which is marked,

(Sally Wells d. 1821 ag<sup>d</sup> 37.)

The sweet remembrance of the just  
Shall flourish, tho' they sleep in dust.

#### DIVISION OF LOTS

The manner in which the first division of lots was made is given in Chapter I. A second division was made of one hundred acres each in 1761. A large portion of these lots was laid out in South Ashfield, the rest were scattered. Between this time and 1800, three more divisions were laid out—the third of one hundred, the fourth and fifth of fifty acres each. The third division was mainly in the south and southwest part of the town, the fourth mostly in the northwest part, and the fifth over the town to fill up vacant places that were left. These irregular gores and the four-rod roads left between the lots have made many disputes between landholders, and some serious neighborhood quarrels.

Some thirty-five years ago a map was made about two feet square showing these three hundred and fifteen lots, five divisions of sixty-three lots each. This was deposited in the town clerk's office and cared for by Mr. Ranney. Later, our County Register hearing of its existence had it sent to the office, a number of blue prints made from it, one retained in the office

there, and several sent back for the use of the town. One is now in a frame in the selectmen's office and several are held by different individuals. This map has been found useful in tracing out lines where old deeds have to be consulted. Of course, the variation of the compass and other matters must be taken into consideration. It will be noticed that instead of laying out the first lots due north and south as is now done in government surveys, they were twenty degrees from the magnetic meridian. This was probably done to correspond with the east line of the town which was known to run in that direction. In the northwest part of the town they were laid out eight degrees from the meridian. In the plan it is seen that in some instances the lots are laid over on to each other. When we consider that the land was all forest, the divisions sometimes twenty or thirty years apart, and the work done by different men, this was not strange.

According to provisions of the grant, in each of the five divisions of the sixty-three lots there must be "One for the Minister, one for the Ministry, and one for the School." This, of course, would locate them in different parts of the town, and the early claim of each of the two religious societies to the ministerial lands was the main cause of the dissensions between them. In 1820, a committee chosen to investigate the matter, reported that these lands belonged to no particular sect, but to the town. The ministerial lots were soon after sold by the town to different individuals.

Like the ministerial, the five school lots were in different parts of the town. In the first division the school lot was No. 54 on the hill south of the village, in the second division it was No. 1 south and west of Blakeslee's mill, in the third northerly from F. H. Smith's farm, in the fourth and fifth divisions, in the northwest part of the town. In 1880 all these lots were surveyed, located, and a map made of them. These maps are recorded in the clerk's office. Sometimes more than half a dozen individuals would occupy and each pay a small school tax on his portion of the lot. To collect this occasioned so much trouble that the town voted to sell the school lands, and with

the exception of a small portion of No. 54 they have been sold. The town annually pays \$54 which is 6% on the original appraised value of these lands for the support of schools.

The first houses here were, of course, of logs. The trees had to be cut down to make a clearing, the logs were then cut off the proper length, two sides roughly hewed, then placed upon each other for the walls of the house. Clay was plentiful, and crevices between the logs could easily be filled with that substance. Richard Ellis' house just north of where Mr. Lanfair lives, Thomas Phillips' house in the northeast part of what is now Mr. Kendrick's pasture and Chileab Smith's house north of Mr. Wait's (the first three houses built in town), also, shortly after, the Belding, Alden and Standish houses were built in this way. A large stone chimney laid in clay finished the structure. Near the remains of these old chimneys can usually be found a spring or shallow well.

Richard Ellis took immediate advantage of the sawmill built in 1753-4 and put up the first frame house in Huntstown so that the record of the first road laid to the settlement in 1754, reads "from the west side of Thomas Phillips' lot in a straight line to Richard Ellis' new house." This house stood a few rods southwest of where Will Lanfair now lives. With the new sawmill near them other frame houses were soon built. The house lately occupied by Joshua Hall is probably the oldest now standing in town. Dr. Ellis seems to think that this house was first occupied by Capt. Lamrock Flower, but there is some evidence that Dea. Ebenezer Belding lived there in 1763 as the first Congregational church was organized that year in this house and Dea. Belding was one of the fifteen members. Probably the two next in age now standing in town are the house occupied by Chapin Elmer, built by John Blackmer before 1770, and the house just below occupied by Harlow Phillips, built by Dea. Isaac Shepard in 1764. Dr. Ellis thinks the house now occupied by Addison Graves was built in 1765 by Mary Lyon's grandfather, Aaron Lyon. Mr. Ranney said he had heard that the old Dea. Ziba Smith house was formerly the Mitchell tavern, standing on the east side of Bellows Hill.

The first frame houses built were usually one story like that opposite the Joshua Hall house, those in which Clayton Eldredge and Charles A. Hall live, the Wright and Josiah Smith houses on the "Flat," the houses in Cape Street and others. They were usually first built with a long kitchen in the rear, two "square rooms" in front with a huge stone chimney in the centre. Sometimes a smaller one-story house was built, then as the occupant became more prosperous, a one-room wide, two-story front was added to the end of the old part. The Charles Richmond, Sanford Boice, George Pease and other houses were built in this way. From 1790 to 1810, many very substantial two-story houses were built nearly alike. The Mrs. Amanda Hall house built by Esq. White in 1794, Professor Norton's built by Dr. Phineas Bartlett in 1792, Clarence Hall's built by Esq. Williams in 1800, Albert Howes' also built in 1800 by George Ranney were among the houses of this style. The first floor still had the long kitchen in the rear, the two square ones in front. From 1820 to 1845 one and one-half story houses all nearly of the same pattern seem to have been decidedly in favor. The houses owned by Anton Dige, Ceylon Bates, Will Turner, Edward Guilford, George Morton and more than a dozen others now standing in town were built in that way. Asa Davis, a carpenter from Buckland, did considerable work here and recommended this style of house as he had built one for himself in Buckland village. In the earlier years a man was likely to build a house patterned after some other he had seen, but in these later times he builds after a plan of his own. Hoyt Smith was another energetic carpenter from Buckland who did a good deal of work here. Jonathan Lilly, Jr., and Elisha Wing were the principal town carpenters. Luther Chapin and George Braman came later.

The moving of buildings was formerly more common than at present. The house where Mrs. Prouty lives was moved from near where Mrs. Curtis' house now stands, Mr. Maltby's house formerly stood on the opposite side of the street, and the Jasper Bement store which stood in the front part of what is now Henry Taylor's yard is now the building occupied by Riggs & Eldredge.



A large two-story house built by Jonathan Lilly about 1830 and occupied by him for a number of years, which stood nearly opposite the Sullivan place, was moved to Shelburne Falls in 1863, and is now owned and occupied by the Elijah Shaw family. Walter Shaw's house was moved from "Bug Hill" and many others have changed their location from the place in which they were built.

Barns were moved with cattle over the ground on shoes without rollers, frequently quite a distance in a single day. Uncle Ebenezer Robbins, "Old Robbins" of Cummington, was the great building mover. He was a man of large stature, a tremendous tobacco chewer and with a voice that it was said could sometimes be heard a mile in his commands. When twenty or thirty yoke of cattle were hitched to the building Robbins would take his station at a short distance and after rolling his quid from one cheek to the other give the word of command. "All ready—Straighten your teams—Now, All together." The whips would fly and the great building would move on several rods, when the breakage of a chain or some other balk would call forth a majestic "Wh-o-a."

Oh, for the youngsters the spectacle was sublime. After the moving was over, came the bountiful lunch of doughnuts and cheese. In the earlier days there was a liberal supply of "Rhum" to go with it.

These neighborhood gatherings were very pleasant, and as nearly every farmer had a yoke of cattle it gave them a good chance to inspect each other's property and trade or "mis-mate" if desirable.

At first the settlers were content with the spring near by, or a shallow well. One of these shallow wells may be seen near where the cabin of Thomas Phillips stood in Mr. Kendrick's pasture, another in Church & Broadhurst's pasture near the site of the Phillips and Ellis fort, now marked by a large millstone. Water was either dipped up by hand or drawn up by a bucket on the end of a short pole. Then, as houses were built on higher ground at a distance from springs, deeper and more substantial wells were dug and the well-sweep and "old oaken bucket" came into

vogue; later, the windlass and pumps, either wooden, iron, or chain. There are probably few houses in town seventy-five or a hundred years old, but have a deep well very near, covered perhaps with a flat stone and a foot of soil, its location very likely unknown to the present occupants. When Jonathan Lilly was digging his well at the house now owned by Mr. Belding and occupied by Dr. Jones, a good sized stone fell from the surface to the bottom just missing Mr. Lilly's head. Mr. Sanderson's diary for 1808 relates that a man in town was killed by the caving in of a well. By and by people began to make use of the "gravity system" and aqueducts were laid to the houses. A straight, clean, hemlock tree, some eight or ten inches in diameter was cut down, and logs six or eight feet in length were cut from it with a crosscut saw. These logs were placed upon a wooden horse about three feet high and a man with an auger a little longer than the logs would bore usually an inch hole through the centre of each from end to end. One end of the hole was then rimmed out with the "rimmer," the other end of the log sharpened with an axe, then smoothed over with the "sheep's head" so as to perfectly fit the rimmed hole of the log next to it. Then beginning at the lower end of the ditch one log was firmly driven into another until the spring was reached. A plug was tightly fitted into the end of the lower log, a shorter perpendicular log was inserted into this, coming about three feet above the surface of the ground, and from this the water run through a "penstock" into a wooden trough usually dug out from a large tree cut on the premises. The boring and fitting of these logs was quite a trade, as it required a pretty good eye and no little skill to come out at the centre of the other end of the log when boring. Experts at the trade were Heman Howes and Charles Elmer in the east, and William Fuller and others in the west part of the town. Lead pipe for aqueducts began to appear in the thirties and forties but came slowly into use as people were afraid of lead poison.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CHURCHES

A history of the Baptist Church in this part of the town is a history of the Smith family at this period, and their peculiar traits of character can be shown no better than by giving extracts from the early records of this church.

Record of the Planting, Gathering and Proceedings of the Baptist Church of Christ in Ashfield:

In the spring of the year 1753 Chileab Smith moved it to his Neighbors to set up Religious Meetings, which they did, and a Blessing followed; and a Number (in the Judgment of Charity) were brought savingly home to Christ.

Oct. 25, 1753. A number met for solemn fasting and prayer, and Chileab Smith and Sarah his wife, Ebenezer Smith, Mary Smith and Jemima entered into a written covenant together to keep up the Worship of God, and to walk up to farther light as they should require it.

Nov. 29, 1753. Ebenezer Smith, being desired, began to improve among them by way of Doctrine.

At this time Chileab Smith was 45 years old; his son Ebenezer, just named, 19; the daughter Mary, older than Ebenezer, and Jemima, younger. The records continue:

In the years 1754 and 1755 they were forced to leave the Town for some months, for fear of the Indians.

1756. They continued in the Town and kept up the Publick Worship of God on the first day of the week continually, Refreshing all that Came to Hear and Attend the Worship with them.

July 2, 1761, they were embodied as a church of ten members, of whom six were members of Mr. Smith's family. Chileab, Enos and Eunice, three more of his children, a short time after, united with the church. The records, after giving the formation of the church, articles of faith and the covenant, with a list of those baptized and joining the covenant, continue thus:

Feb., 1763. The people of another Persuasion settled a Minister in the Town, and obliged the Baptists to pay their

proportion of his Settlement and Salary till 1768. Then the Church sent Chileab Smith to the General Court at Boston, with a petition for Help; but Got None.

In 1769 the Church made their case known to the Baptist Association at Warren (Worcester Co.) and Received from them a Letter of Admittance into that Body.

In April, 1770, the other Society sold 400 acres of the Baptist Lands for the support of their Minister and Meeting-House.

Under our Oppression we sent eight times to the General Court at Boston for help but Got None.

In Oct., 1771, We were set at Liberty by an order from the King of Great Britain, and our Lands Restored.

Between 1771 and 1785 the records are meagre and incomplete, eight pages being missing during this time. The church seems to have flourished and received large accessions under Elder Ebenezer Smith's ministrations. The church on the hill was built during this time, about twenty rods north of Chileab Smith's house.

This house was on the hill nearly opposite the Baptist Corner burying ground. Its exact location is marked by a stone tablet erected about eight years ago at which time there were public exercises, with historical addresses by Rev. C. S. Pease and by Sidney Smith, Esq., of Boston, a descendant of Chileab.

In the year 1785, with Enos Smith as clerk, the records give a minute account of a difficulty which arose between Elder Ebenezer Smith and his father, Chileab, respecting the salary of a minister, the Elder contending that he should have a fixed salary, and his father that ministers should not be hirelings, but should preach for a love of the work, and be content with what the church sees fit to give him. The church and Mr. Smith's family were divided on the question. Meeting after meeting was held, and the advice of neighboring churches sought without avail; the breach grew wider. Finally, (resuming the record):

Oct. 25, 1786. The Church Concluded that any further Labour with the Elder amongst ourselves would be fruitless, agreed once more to send to sister churches for help.

The Council, being convened December 27, after hearing both sides, decided: "That the Elder was justifiable in his conduct; and advised the church, after they had concluded that their

acts were invalidated, to receive the Elder into his office in the church again, and to let him know that we have made him a Reasonable Compensation for his Labours amongst us, and then to continue the Relation as Church and Pastor, or Dismiss him in Peace.

Jan. 24, 1787. The Church considered the Result of the Council before mentioned, and found that it wanted the Testimony of Scripture for its support, by which we desired to be tried; and that if we followed their Result and advice we must leave God's word as to our understandings. Therefore, Voted, That we cannot agree with their Result, for many obvious and Scriptural Reasons, which may be seen at Large in the original Records.

Aug. 29, 1788. Friday the Church met for solemn fasting and Prayer to Almighty God, it being a dark time with us, we being despised by men, Elder Smith and his party having taken from us our meetinghouse, and we turned out to meet where we could find a place, and the Association, on hearing his story, having dropped us from that body.

But Chileab Smith did not despair. In his paper on the Baptist persecution Charles Hall says, "Mr. Smith was a man with a tremendous disposition to have his own way. He had not the slightest doubt that his own opinion on any subject was right, and he would fight for his convictions with the courage of a lion. In his quarrels, he

"Spared neither land, nor gold,  
Nor son, nor wife,  
Nor limb, nor life,  
In the brave days of old."

He was interested to have a church in the rough new country where he had settled, but he must be the infallible head of the church, whose opinions must not be questioned." In this case it was a difference with his own son, who probably inherited some of the qualities of his parent. It was Smith blood against Smith blood. While Ebenezer, the son, kept on with his church on the hill, Chileab, the father, set about organizing another church without the aid of ministers or other churches, and, January 14, 1789, Chileab Smith, Sr., then over eighty years of age, and Enos Smith, his son, were ordained as elders and leaders in the church and Isaac Shepard and Moses Smith, deacons. They

united with the Baptists from Buckland and built a church on the corner a little northwest of the house where George Howes now lives, a few rods north of the Ashfield line. It was a one-story building, with a four-sided pointed roof. There is good evidence that they built this house in 1789. By the records, the church seemed to gain in numbers and was by degrees received into fellowship with other churches. The two churches remained separate some seven years. The records do not state just the manner of union.

In 1796, it was voted to remove our meetings to the church, and in 1798 it was "voted to receive back Ebenezer Smith with such members as are willing to tell their experience." This record may be misleading, for Chileab and Enos' party went back into the house on the hill from which they had seceded, taking their minister, Enos, with them, Ebenezer having resigned, making the union appear like a compromise. These records are of their church. The records of Ebenezer's church were in the possession of William Stetson and were burned when the Whiting house near Buckland Four Corners was destroyed by fire about thirty years ago.

After 1798, Elder Ebenezer preached in other parts of the state, finally removing to Stockton, N.Y., in 1816. Elder Enos continued to preach in the old church on the hill into the twenties, living up to his father's theory of no stated pay for ministers and charging nothing for his preaching beyond voluntary contributions. Erastus Elmer said he remembered that his father used to carry in a quarter of beef in the fall for Elder Enos' winter use. Mrs. Lydia Miles recalls Chileab's arguments against "hirelings" for preachers; that Christ didn't choose college educated men for his disciples, but took them from the lowest walks of life and they served without pay. In 1826, it was voted to have the Elder render an account to a committee annually in December what was done for his support.

But it did not seem easy to hold the flock together, for probably half the records are cases of discipline, choosing of committees to visit the "wanderers," "disorderly walkers," those absenting themselves from church, and so on. We quote from



some of the reports of these committees. Sister Fuller "is hindered by the providence of God." Brother Newman was in fellowship with the church but had "absented to perform some privet Labours." Brother Wilkie acknowledged "frolicking with the world, but would try to return to the church." From Brother Steele they "got no satisfaction." May 17, 1801, "After considerable labor with Bro. Zadok King for his joining the Methodists the Church voted they could not commune with him in his present condition." May 31, Zadok requests the church to give him in writing the scriptural reasons why they cannot commune with him, and a committee is chosen for that purpose. June 24, the committee report that they accepted his request, but the "reasons" are not recorded. Two brothers in the church being at variance, a committee was chosen to labor with them and it is recorded as settled that evening. Two other brothers, also near neighbors, having had a difference of long standing were finally debarred from the communion and a committee appointed to "Labour with them." Not long after this the record says the parties appeared, acknowledged their fault and repentance towards the church and each other and "All in peace." This was certainly better and cheaper than "going to law" about it.

Elisha Smith, having joined the Masons at Greenfield, it is recorded December 24, 1800, "At this meeting after Solemn Labour with Brother Elisha Smith for joining the freemasons, the church voted to postpone the matter to the next meeting, he not being Present, and chose these brethren to confer with Elisha Smith; viz: Dea. Perkins, Dea. Shepard, Brother Thomas Phillips and Brother Israel Standish to the aforementioned Bisness." January 24, 1801, "The Church called upon their former committee that was chosen to confer with Brother Smith who report that he says he has no desire to leave the church and he being present the Church then entered into a Solemn labour with him and then voted unanimously that they cannot commune with him in his present Standing." May 25, 1803, "At this meeting Brother Elisha Smith wished to be restored to the church. After much labor Postponed the matter to some future opportunity."

Nothing more appears regarding this until April 25, 1827, the time of the Anti-Mason excitement, when the church took up the matter again as is related under Secret Societies. It looks as though the church had a warm discussion over it, the Elder doing his best to keep the Masons out, while his brother Elder, as Master of the new Ashfield lodge, was taking them in. It does not appear that any were really expelled for belonging to the order, but fair warning was given that if new ones joined, it would give ground for excommunication. About this time several of the Edson family were disciplined for "showing a leaning towards the Episcopalians."

In 1828, the members living in Buckland withdrew from this church to form a new church in that town. In 1830, members living in the central and southerly parts of this town withdrew and joined the new church at South Ashfield. In 1831, the old church on the hill being somewhat out of repair, was taken down and removed to the rear of the locust grove, about a hundred rods to the east of its former location. After Elder Enos' death, some of the ministers who officiated for a short time each were Elders Brown, Hale, Norris, Eggleston, Stearns, and Amsden. Elder Edward Hale was grandfather of Charles and Samuel Hale. During this time desertions to the Freewill Baptists enfeebled their ranks, and between 1840 and 1850 Millerism and the Second Adventists so diminished their numbers that meetings soon ceased to be held. The building went to ruins, and now a modest schoolhouse stands upon the spot. Not only the building but the church itself which Chileab Smith and his sons "planted and gathered" with so much care has ceased to exist.

Elder Ebenezer died in Stockton, N. Y., in 1824, aged ninety, and Elder Enos in 1836, aged eighty-seven years. Both were good men, highly respected by those who knew them, and left behind a large and useful posterity. At the head of Elder Enos' grave in Baptist Corner stands a Revolutionary iron marker, and on the stone is inscribed

Faith, that dispels affliction's darkest gloom,  
And hope, that looks beyond the tomb,  
Peace, that not hell's dark legions can destroy.

And love, that fills the soul with heavenly joy,  
Lab'ring, he preached till summoned from on high,  
To quit his toil and rest above the sky.

Scattered through the old church records are many notes of dismissals to those removing to "distant parts." Out of the upwards of six hundred names that stood on their books as members, the Aldens, Shepards, Smiths, Ellises, Lyons, Lindseys, Crittendens, Harveys, Richmonds, Standishes, Paines, Chapins, Elmers and many others, only few remain, but their descendants may be found from Maine to California. Strong and true men and women went out from here and made their mark in the "distant parts" where they cast their lot. With all their crudities and imperfections, who can doubt the good and lasting influence which the stern discipline of the old Baptist Church exerted upon those nurtured within its fold.

A second Baptist Society was formed in South Ashfield and a church built there in 1814, which building is now the South Ashfield "Village Hall." Rev. Josiah Loomis, a graduate from Elder Enos' church, was the minister until 1820 when he removed to the state of New York. He was ordained to the ministry at a public ordination in 1808. He lived on the north side of Briar Hill near the locust grove below the house of Henry Cross, where the old cellar hole may still be seen. He was the ancestor of the Loomises of Holyoke, also of Mabel Loomis Todd, wife of Professor Todd, the Amherst astronomer. Rev. Orra Martin was the second minister, and lived at the Sears place above Charles Lilly's farm. The church ceased its organization about 1841, and in 1843 the building was conveyed to the Universalist Society.

The Ashfield Plain Baptist Church was organized January 13, 1867, and was incorporated October 3, 1868. There were fourteen constituent members and fifty-two when the church was incorporated. The church building was given by the remaining members of the Baptist Church in Buckland and was moved and put up in Ashfield in 1869. The inside was repaired in 1884, and in 1900 it was repaired and painted outside, also a slate roof put on. The parsonage was built in 1886.

The following is a list of the settled ministers: Revs. E. N. Jencks, 1868; Thomas H. Goodwin, 1871; George W. Sander-son, 1872; George A. Willard, 1874; W. D. Athern, 1881; George Shepard, 1884; William Libbey, 1886; S. W. Whitney, 1892; C. S. Pease, 1896; H. A. Calhone, 1903; J. E. Dame, 1905; Edward Cooper, 1910.

David Pease, better known as "Father Pease," had a good deal to do with organizing the church, and supplied the pulpit a number of times. Other supplies were Asa Randlett, H. R. Mitchell, and W. T. Rice.

#### CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

In February, 1863, one hundred years from its formation, Rev. Willard Brigham of the First Congregational Church gave an historical discourse. This paper was preserved by Mr. Ranney, from which we make the following abstract:

A history of the Congregational Church in Ashfield is not a history of the town, although for more than half the period of its existence the town acted as its parish; yet I shall endeavor to confine myself closely to church affairs, leaving the many interesting facts and items not directly connected with its history to be preserved by some future historian of the town.

In 1834, Rev. Mr. Shepard wrote sketches of the history of Ashfield, devoting but a single chapter to ecclesiastical affairs, so that what is said of this church was less than half a dozen pages of his valuable manuscript. Dr. Packard's history of the churches contains some important facts, together with biographical notices of the pastors and preachers who have originated from this town. These most valuable parts of a truthful history of this church have been well preserved, and I do not deem it best to copy and invite you to listen to what has been printed and read by many. Could we get at the inner lives of its most devoted members we should have an abundance of the very best material for the church's history. But this cannot be. The early records of the church are meager. The first eight pages are lost, and the first record remaining dates five years after its organization. During the thirty-three years of Rev. Mr. Porter's pastorate all is contained on four pages. From May, 1795, to April, 1805, no record is made save the names of those added and those baptized.

The conditions made to the Proprietors of Huntstown were similar to like grants made by this grand old Puritan province. Religion was first; each town must have its meeting house with minister of orthodox faith as well as schools. The grant was to be divided into sixty-three shares; sixty for the soldiers, one for the minister, one for the ministry and one for the schools. (One right or share would be about 400 acres.) Among the conditions of their retaining their rights to these lands, the proprietors were to settle a minister and build a meeting house. The proprietors were sufficiently near Plymouth Rock and had enough of that blood to cheerfully accept and carry out the design in regard to preaching and schools. One of their first acts after their organization in 1739 was to choose a committee to provide and agree with a minister to preach to such as inhabit Huntstown, at their discretion, and that "said committee shall give order to the treasurer for the payment of the minister who has already preached there." In the spring of 1743, a similar committee was chosen with like instructions. Revs. Dickinson and Streeter were sent up by the Proprietors from Hadley to preach at different times.

In 1761, Chileab Smith organized a Baptist Church in Baptist Corner with his own son, then nineteen years old, as minister. A majority of the Proprietors, resident and non-resident members, were Congregationalists and they evidently did not recognize Mr. Smith's church in Baptist Corner as fulfilling the conditions of the grant as to an orthodox minister, and being as near the center as may be; for in December, 1762, they vote "to give Rev. Jacob Sherwin, a graduate of Yale, if he will settle in the ministry, 100 pounds in settlement and 60 pounds yearly till they shall arrive to the number of sixty families, and then to raise twenty shillings per family, if they shall increase annually until they come to the number of eighty families, at which time he shall be entitled to 80 pounds a year as long as he continues their minister, also he is to have 4 pounds annually above this to procure firewood." Mr. Sherwin accepted the call and was installed February 23, 1763, the church being organized the day previous, one hundred years ago today, consisting of fifteen members, seven males and eight females besides Mr. Sherwin. This included a negro man, Heber Honestman, a servant employed by Phillip Phillips. They had no place of worship but held their meetings at the dwelling house of Ebenezer Belding, which is a part of the house where Joshua Hall now lives.

The articles of faith and covenant adopted by the church and continued until 1829 are lost; at least I have not been able to



find a copy. The creed as it stood did not differ essentially from the one substituted in its place. The objections to it were that it was obscure, indefinite and rather prolix. Dr. Shepard said as near as he could recollect, about one-third of it was occupied with a discussion of the effect of Adam's fall upon his posterity. He recollects inquiring of Dr. Crosby of Conway when the creed of his church was prepared. His reply was, "I do not know for a certainty, but I think it must have been soon after the fall of Adam, for it is very definite on that subject."

The town was incorporated June 21, 1765, and by the law then passed the Proprietors were still held to certain duties, viz., to build the meetinghouse, settle a minister, make and repair roads, and so forth, the charges for which were to be assessed upon the lands. (Mr. Brigham here relates the different steps taken in regard to building the meetinghouse, which we omit, it having already been given in another place.) After the house on the Plain was covered with shingles, a very plain pulpit was made, without cushions, and seats were formed by boards placed upon blocks, and in this state it began to be occupied in 1768. The General Court sent a committee to Ashfield to see if the conditions in regard to incorporation had been complied with and they reported that the town had fulfilled the order. The town then assumed control, including ecclesiastical affairs. The town laid out the pew ground and sold to individuals who were able and disposed to erect pews, devoting the avails to the completion of the house. In 1792, they purchased cushions for the pulpit and in 1795, when the last sale of the pew grounds was made, the proceeds finished the repairs and hired a singing master for the winter.

Mr. Sherwin's pastorate of the church was eleven years and three months, during which sixty-four persons were added to the church, and one hundred and nineteen baptized. In 1773, some trouble arose over a case of discipline, and soon after this the town having assumed responsibility in regard to the minister's salary, the number of families had increased to seventy, entitling Mr. Sherwin by his contract to 70 pounds. The town did not consider themselves bound by the Proprietors' contract and voted only 50 pounds, which he refused to accept, but claimed



his full salary. The town then requested his dismissal. He offered to compromise but the town insisted on his dismissal. A council was called and as the town refused to accept its decision Mr. Sherwin would not take his dismissal. The controversy deepened. Meetings multiplied. The town took advice. Another council was called in May, 1774, which dismissed Mr. Sherwin, but decided that the town should pay him according to the Proprietors' contract up to the time of his dismissal. Mr. Sherwin remained in town eight years, was town clerk, selectman, and the first person to hold the office of Justice of the Peace in town. He removed to Sunderland, Vermont, where he died in 1803.

In August, the church extended a call to Rev. Nehemiah Porter, which he declined on account of the inadequacy of the salary. In October the call was renewed with some addition to the salary. Mr. Porter, having a family, deemed it insufficient for his support and again declined, but suggested that with some land to rely upon he might be able to support his family. In November, they gave Mr. Porter a call, offering him the fifty acres of ministerial land to be his property at settlement and sixty pounds annually.\* (This was lot No. 55 of the first division, afterwards the Justus Smith farm, bounded north by Mrs. Julia Wing and Mr. Belding's land, west by Mr. Belding's hill. It was fifty rods wide and extended south one hundred and sixty rods.) He was installed December 24, 1774, preaching his own installation sermon. He was sole pastor until June, 1808, over thirty-three years, and until he was in his eighty-ninth year.

Packard's history contains a lengthy account of his life. The depreciation of the currency was such that in 1779, the town raised 4,752 pounds Continental money for Mr. Porter's salary, equal to 66 pounds lawful money.

In 1782, the church voted that the Psalm might be sung half the time without being read line by line. In 1800 it is said that but three carriages were owned by those attending the Congregational church and these were only lumber wagons. The roads were tortuous and hilly, the means of traveling were on

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\*The remarks in parentheses are by the compiler.

horseback and on foot. Yet all went to meeting. One old man who lived three miles from church and had eleven in his family said all could be accommodated, for those who couldn't ride could go on foot. There were no cushions on the seats, no backs to lean against, not convenient for sleeping, no fire, and ministers preached and prayed long in those days. It is said that Mr. Porter in the short days of winter would preach as long as he could read from his notes. The communion service purchased in Mr. Porter's ministry was from a bequest of Obadiah Dickinson, the Proprietors' treasurer for many years.

The controversy with the Baptists would occasionally break out but it does not appear that Mr. Porter had anything to do with it. In 1809, the Baptists, through Mr. John Alden, presented a memorial to the town which they desired put on record. "May 15, 1809. Voted: That Elijah Paine, Esq., Thomas White and John Alden be a committee to obtain Information concerning the Grant of the Ministerial Lands to the town of Ashfield." (The memorial and the report stand on the town records, containing about a dozen closely written pages.)

In this memorial the Baptists claim a share in the ministerial land, that their lands have been taxed to support Congregational preaching, and recite other grievances of the past. A committee was chosen to consider the memorial and in December, 1810, reported at length through its chairman, Esq. Paine. The ground taken by this report was that the Baptists had no claim upon the town for these lands, because they settled no learned orthodox minister, and built no meetinghouse as the grant and law contemplated; that this matter had already been legally decided and at that late day the town had nothing to do with it.

In the office of the Clerk of Courts in Northampton is this record:

March 26, 1762. Petition put in from Phillip Phillips for an action against the assessors of Huntstown, viz. Ephraim Marvel and Reuben Allis for relief from an illegal tax, on the ground that Ebenezer Smith was exempted from taxation as being a settled minister. At a court held in Springfield, May 4, it was decided that the tax was illegal, and that Phillip Phillips

recover from the assessors the amount of tax. This was evidently a test case, brought before the courts to have a legal decision as to whether the young man preaching to the Baptists was really a settled minister. The Baptist side of this controversy has been presented in Mr. Hall's paper. Anyone caring to investigate this more fully can find much in Vol. IV, pp. 1035 to 1046, also in Vol. V, pp. 228 and 9 of the old Province Laws.

We cannot blame the Baptists for resisting these acts of oppression, but at that time under the then existing law the Proprietors could do no different. They were obliged to make and collect an equal tax on all the property holders for the minister and meetinghouse as well as for roads and schools. If it was wrong it was the fault of the law, not of the town or church. But in 1779, when delegates were chosen to form a new state constitution, strong instructions were given that no laws should be passed that should oppress any persons or sect in matters of religion.

Rev. Alvan Sanderson was installed as colleague pastor of Mr. Porter, June 22, 1808. It was estimated that two thousand persons witnessed the ceremony, being seated in the hollow near where the tomb now is, the speakers in front of the church door near the White burial lot. (An account of his life and labors is given in Dr. Shepard's sketch, also in the Academy history, also in Dr. Packard's history.) Four complete manuscript diaries of the Rev. Alvan Sanderson for the years 1802, 1808, 1809 and 1814 are preserved in the office of the town clerk. We quote his account of the installation, June 22:

Was with ye council. Took breakfast with them. Went to see my brothers and sisters who had arrived in town. Walked in procession to ye place appointed for ye installation to take place, (it being near ye meeting house.) The parts were performed by ye following ministers, viz. Rev. Mr. Spaulding made ye introductory prayer, Rev. Mr. Emerson preached ye sermon, text Heb. 13, 17, Rev. Dr. Lyman made ye consecrating prayer, Rev. Mr. Wells gave ye charge, Rev. Mr. Nash gave ye right hand of fellowship, and Rev. Mr. Whitman made ye concluding prayer. The several parts were well performed. The concourse of people present

was very large. It was judged of there were at least 3000 people present. They were very orderly, attentive and solemn. Blessed be God for His smiles upon us. The occasion was peculiarly interesting and solemn to me. My mind I trust was deeply impressed with a sense of ye greatness and importance of ye charge I took upon me. May God in much mercy make me faithful to ye souls of the dear people under my charge.

From 1801 to 1812 there was much discussion as to a new meetinghouse and its location. The people in the village naturally wanted it retained there while those in the south part of the town desired it nearer them. (In the Chapter on the Town Hall is given the reasons for its location on the "Flat." Dr. Enos Smith who lived where the Wright place now is, is said to have been quite influential in having the house located there.) In August, 1815, Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge was called as a pastor but the council convened to settle him found such a determined opposition that they decided against his settlement. Much feeling was aroused, two parties, the Woodbridge and anti-Woodbridge were formed and another attempt was made to settle him with the same result. After the dismissal of Mr. Sanderson and the rejection of Mr. Woodbridge the church had no settled pastor for three years, when June, 1819, Rev. Thomas Shepard was ordained. So sore was the rent occasioned by the Woodbridge quarrel that it did not heal and some of the members favorable to Mr. Woodbridge left the church and joined other churches, the Episcopal Church being formed at this time. Mr. Shepard was aware of the dissension in the church and his letter accepting the call is direct and manly. His pastorate of fourteen years was highly successful. Many were added to the church and he was a helpful factor in the town as a citizen in various ways. He was at the head of the temperance reformation. (His name may be seen at the head of the list of names given on another page as belonging to the first Temperance Society in town.) He organized a Sunday School soon after his settlement. James McFarland was the superintendent for many years and Daniel Forbes the principal teacher. The main lessons of those times were to commit to memory passages of Scripture. Some of the pupils could repeat passages until the

teacher could hear no more for want of time. A daughter of Ezekiel Taylor in one week committed to memory twelve chapters of the New Testament besides doing her work. Mr. Shepard asked for his dismission September, 1832, giving as a reason, failing health.

May 9, 1833, Rev. Mason Grosvenor was installed pastor. Soon after his settlement, Mr. Grosvenor openly attacked the infidelity that prevailed. His object was undoubtedly good but his manner unwise. The church unhappily became involved in an excitement which so pervaded the whole community that Dr. Bement, then a deacon of the church, remarked that there was not a person of calm nerves in the whole town. In a large public church meeting called for the purpose, the infidelity and Dr. Knowlton as the leader of it were attacked and when the doctor arose to defend himself he was not permitted to do it, as being out of order. The pastor preached a severe sermon against the doctor which led a member of the church to comment severely upon the sermon. The excitement was kept up, resulting in the excommunication of the member, then in the calling of an ex-parte council which restored him. Mrs. Miles in her *Reminiscences* says of Mr. Grosvenor: "As I remember him he was a man of strong convictions, very decided opinions, and would do and say whatever he thought to be right, utterly regardless of consequences." The party excommunicated and restored again was Mr. Nathaniel Clark, a highly respected citizen, who defended valiantly "his doctor" whom he considered abused. Mr. Grosvenor died recently in Ohio, and his son was a member of Congress. Dr. Knowlton wrote a pamphlet in defence of himself, entitled "A History of the Recent Excitement in Ashfield." This is preserved on the shelves of the P. V. M. A., at Deerfield. The dismission of Mr. Grosvenor in July 1835 left the church in a very unhappy state.

Rev. Burr Baldwin was installed April 20, 1836, and dismissed September, 1838. The summer he was settled the Sabbath School numbered three hundred and seventy-four. Daniel Forbes was superintendent, Alvan Perry, assistant, with Wait Bement, librarian. The church numbered two hundred and



ninety-six. In the two years Mr. Baldwin was here it diminished seventeen, chiefly by removals west.

In June, 1840, Rev. Sereno D. Clark was installed over the church. Soon after the settlement of Mr. Clark the interior of the church was remodelled and the upper room formed. The event most affecting the church during Mr. Clark's ministry was trouble with the singing. (At the close of a large singing school, choristers were to be chosen to lead the choir. They could not agree upon one man, therefore two were chosen, one for each party. Both choirs were in the singers' gallery Sunday and when the first hymn was given out, each leader named a different tune, and both choirs started off together. After one verse, the singers from one choir left their seats. Quaint Uncle Isaac Taylor at this, aptly quoted Scripture for the occasion: "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in our ears, the songs of the sanctuary are turned into howling.") The want of harmony was in the dispositions of the choir, not in the voices. It commenced in the choir and was taken up by the parish and church. The minority seceded and for a while held separate meetings on the Sabbath in the town hall. A council was called in the autumn of 1847 to organize a second church if thought best, but the council thought otherwise and drew up conditions of agreement which were mutually accepted. Mr. Clark resigned his pastorate to accept a call to Lee in April, 1851. (Mr. Clark was accused by each party of favoring the "other side" but evidently endeavored to keep clear of the controversy as far as possible. He was a very able preacher, sound in the doctrines of the day, "viciously orthodox" as one outsider expressed it.)

Rev. Wm. H. Gilbert was installed in December, 1851, and dismissed in August, 1855. The principal event of his pastorate was the division of the church and the formation of the second church in the village.

Mr. Brigham, becoming the pastor just after Mr. Gilbert and after the division, in his discourse, declines to discuss the causes of the separation but thinks there was really no good reason for it. In 1855, the second church was formed and the next year a



new house was built. The main cause of the separation was a charge made against the aged treasurer of the society of looseness and irregularity in his books. The affair was so conducted that bitter feelings were created between the friends of the accused and his accusers. There were good men on both sides arrayed against each other in this unhappy difference, each believing his side in the right. A strong, broad, liberally minded minister like Dr. Shepard, would very likely have controlled the situation and prevented the separation.

Mr. Brigham resigned the same year he gave his centennial discourse, and Rev. E. C. Ewing began his labors, which continued until 1867. About this time the desirability of a union between the two churches began to be seriously discussed. Mr. Ewing immediately resigned, fearing lest he might be in the way of accomplishing the result. The two churches finally decided to leave the conditions of union to a board of referees, and in 1868 they came together, after a separation of twelve years. Since the union the pastors have been: Webster Woodbury, 1868-70; James Dingwell, 1872-77; Jonathan Wadhams, 1878-88; Charles B. F. Pease, 1889-93; George H. Bailey, 1893-98; Horace F. Hallett, 1899-1911. In 1886 a chapel and dining room were added to the church, largely through the influence of Mr. Wadhams, and in 1895 the church interior was tastefully remodelled by the generosity of Mrs. Daniel Williams as a memorial to her husband. The present membership of the church is one hundred and seventy-four.

#### THE EPISCOPAL SOCIETY

Abstract of an Historical Address read in St. John's Church, Ashfield, Mass., by the Rector, the Rev. George Putnam Huntington, Sunday, October 2, 1887:

On the 15th of June, 1820, fourteen of the men of Ashfield put their names to a declaration to the effect that being attached to the doctrines, discipline and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and in exercise of their constitutional privileges which secure to every person the right of worshiping God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, they formed themselves into a society by the name of "the Parish of St. John's

Church, in the town of Ashfield." Of the names attached to this document the first is that of Jesse Edson, who was the first senior warden, and who has been justly termed the father of the parish. Then follow the names of Bethuel Lilly, Joseph Hall, and Lemuel and Simeon Phillips, who were successively wardens during the following twenty or thirty years, and the name of Jonathan Lilly who for twenty-five years was the parish clerk. Simeon Phillips preceded him as the first parish clerk. The other names are David Williams, James Phillips, Howard Edson, Albinus Lilly, Bethuel Lilly, Jr., Phillip M. Phillips, Austin Lilly and Chipman Lilly.

That the Church should ever have been established in this hill town is a matter of surprise. It was the first and it still remains the only parish on the hills, in the diocese. Three causes are to be found which, under Divine guidance, led to the planting of St. John's Church, Ashfield.

The first to be mentioned may rather be termed the opportunity. Dissension had arisen in the Congregational Society over the attempt to settle as their minister, Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge. A determined minority, including the deacons and a former pastor who still resided in the town, opposed Mr. Woodbridge so vehemently that a council held in January, 1817, unanimously advised against his settlement, but not, as was expressly stated, for any fault either of morals or doctrine. In spite of this action of the council, the call was renewed before the end of the same month, but the opposition continued to be so strong that the attempt to retain Mr. Woodbridge was abandoned. This, however, did not bring peace. No minister was settled for some years, and when finally a minister was called, many of the friends of Mr. Woodbridge determined to withdraw. Under the existing statutes, which were then of recent date, and the full force of which was just being understood, the course that was open to them was to unite with some religious society already organized. Thus only could they escape the obligation to pay taxes for the support of the Congregational Society, which was then, in the eye of the law, the established church. Early in the year 1820, therefore, these men who afterwards organized this parish united themselves with St. James' Church, Greenfield, under the Rev. Dr. Strong, who was then the rector. Our town records contain copies of the separate certificates of each of these men signed by the clerk of the Greenfield parish. In June of the same year, this parish of St. John's, Ashfield, was organized, and after that date we find the certificates of others who united with the newly formed parish. Among these are the

familiar names of Levi Cook, Levi Cook, Jr., Seth Hall, Capt. Lot Hall, Joel Lilly, and Joseph Hall, Jr.

It would be most interesting and instructive to know to what extent those who were the originators of this parish had studied into and appreciated the distinctive principles of the Church. If they had suffered from the tyranny of a religious society governed by laymen chosen by a vote of the members, they doubtless welcomed a Church polity in which the administration of spiritual affairs was entrusted solely to a rector and a bishop, i. e., to men educated and trained for the work.

That the founders of this parish had the opportunity of learning the distinctive principles of the Church will appear when we consider what was the second influence which resulted in the organization of this parish, namely, the influence exerted by the rector of St. James' Church, Greenfield, the Rev. Dr. Strong. When the disaffected members of the Congregational Society here looked about for a church of some other denomination with which to unite, the commanding figure of Dr. Strong of Greenfield at once attracted their attention. He was a powerful man, full of zeal and devotion, and identified more or less closely with that school in the English Church which recognized a definite meaning and practical application in the words, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." We may be sure that very wisely and kindly but very plainly he set forth to these men of Ashfield the distinctive principles not merely of the Protestant Episcopal Church but of the Church Catholic of all time. He taught them, as the records show, the necessity of Holy Baptism and the Holy Communion. The first service in this town of which we know the date was held September 24, 1820, by Dr. Strong, who at that service administered the Holy Communion and baptized eight infants.

Mr. Huntington mentions the influence which Jesse Edson, who came from Bridgewater in 1771, had in the formation of this Church. His ancestors were attached to the Church of England and his son, Howard, was a member of the Episcopal Church in Greenfield as early as 1816. Jesse Edson was the lay reader for many years, followed by Simeon Phillips, Joseph Hall, James Phillips, Jonathan Lilly and Chipman Lilly. The first services were held in private houses, then in the South Ashfield meetinghouse, sometimes in the Steady Lane school-house, and sometimes in the town hall in the old tavern. It was

in this building that Bishop Griswold first officiated and held confirmation in July, 1821.

Rev. Lot Jones was the first resident minister, coming here in September, 1823. The parish felt at this time strong enough to build a church, and a disinterested committee was chosen to fix the location. Mr. Levi Cook had offered to present them a lot on the corner but there was a desire to place the church on the hill and the vote to accept the donation of Mr. Cook was only six to five. This donation was made on the condition that if the services should be interrupted for the space of three years, the land should revert to the original owner. Mr. Jones, the minister, went into the woods and gave the final blow which felled the first tree for the building. Jonathan Lilly, the clerk, was the master builder. There were delays in the building and it was not ready for occupation until December, 1827. Twenty-seven men purchased pews at an annual rate of \$117. After Mr. Jones went away, Mr. Withington officiated for a year. After this, Dr. Strong acted as rector, giving one-third of his time until September, 1830, when Rev. Silas Blaisdale became rector. In 1831, he reports that his chief reliance for support was his salary as a teacher in Sanderson Academy which had been closed for some time, but the next year he says he has given up the work as it interfered with his parish work and yielded an insufficient income. In 1833, he reports that forty-five families take pews, and that they attempt to raise a salary of \$250. In 1834 an organ was procured. In 1835 Mr. Blaisdale reports that, "The church furnishes means of grace to a part of the community driven from their accustomed places of worship by the intolerance and restlessness of the times." Dr. Huntington says, "We learn from other sources that during these years the community was greatly excited by the Temperance agitation which met with bitter and determined opposition, and then over the angry persecution of one of the resident physicians, who was an outspoken unbeliever." In July, 1836, Rev. Jacob Pearson became rector. A Sunday School had been organized, probably by Mr. Blaisdale, and the number of scholars reported for fifteen years varied from twenty to sixty. In 1844, with the help of Levi Cook, Esq., the church was painted.

It was about this time that the parish was first assisted by the Board of Missions of the Diocese. At first, \$75 was appropriated, and this was increased soon to \$100. In 1846, Mr. Pearson became disabled by bodily infirmities, and resigned the parish. In August, 1847, Rev. J. A. Stone took charge and was rector for about two years, followed in 1850 by Rev. William Withington who thus became rector for the second time. It was during this time that the parish raised money to purchase the present rectory, and the lot of land containing seven-eighths of an acre. The cost was \$850. The number of communicants was steadily declining, caused by emigration from the town. Of the seventy-five families who attended the church in 1835, by far the greater number eventually left the town. In 1853, Rev. Charles Cleveland became rector and remained in office five years. He was a relative of President Cleveland and was a man loved and respected. In 1860, Rev. C. H. Gardner took charge and it was during his pastorate that the present organ was secured, at a cost of \$800, the money being raised in the parish. Mr. Gardner resigned in November, 1861, and on June 13, 1862, Rev. Thomas Brinton Flower became rector, and after a faithful pastorate of twelve months he died, and was buried before the altar of the church June 25, 1863.

The Rev. Lewis Green began his long pastorate of nineteen years, in October, 1864. So long a connection with the parish, thrice the length of any of the other pastorates, has identified for a whole generation, his name with that of this parish. He remained until the autumn of 1883, when, his failing health obliging him to retire from active labor, he resigned after a pastorate of nineteen years, with keen sorrow at leaving a people endeared to him by years of unremitting kindness to himself and family. The circumstances of his death on the sixteenth of last June need not be dwelt upon. His body was laid in the family lot in the cemetery in Lowell, after the service in that same church in which, in early life, he had been confirmed, ordained deacon, and married. During his long residence in Ashfield, Mr. Green won the esteem and respect of the entire community, and he was called to fill many places of public trust in the town. As a member of the School Committee, as one of the trustees of Sanderson Academy, and as President of



the Library Association he labored most diligently, faithfully, and ably. In the town meetings his voice was often heard, and his words had great weight. He had occasion more than once to take the unpopular side in town matters, and he was a man who had the courage of his convictions. One of the most touching and interesting proofs of Mr. Green's devotion and fidelity to the people of his parish and their spiritual welfare is the pastoral letter which he had printed and sent to all the members of the parish when he was staying at Greenfield a few months before he finally resigned his charge, in closing which he says, "In the good providence of God your pastor is for a time separated from you; but none of the flock are forgotten. His heart goes out to every one, both old and young, and for you, as well as for all your town's folk and neighbors, his prayers are made." These are among his last formal words to his parishioners here, and how closely he did bear them in his heart, those who stood by his bed in his last short illness have testified.

[After the resignation of Rev. Lewis Green, the Rev. George P. Huntington, son of Bishop F. D. Huntington of central New York, was elected rector of St. John's church. He came from Malden, Mass. During Mr. Huntington's stay the church prospered in every way. The rectory was repaired, a new barn was built, a bell was put on the church and the church was put in good condition. Mr. Huntington was here seven years—coming in 1884, and going to Hanover, N. H., in 1891. He died on the same day as his father, Bishop Huntington, and they were buried at Hadley on the same day, July 14, 1904.

Mr. Huntington was followed by Rev. George Fisher who came from Milford, Mass. He had charge also of the church at Shelburne Falls and lived there. He was pastor of the church here from 1892 till 1899 and went to Woods Hole, Mass., after doing a great deal of good work here. He was followed by Rev. J. Hugo Klaren, who came from Worcester in 1899 and was minister in charge until 1902, when he gave up this parish going to live at Shelburne Falls. Rev. David Sprague of Amherst acted as minister in charge from October, 1903, to December, 1904, though Dr. Robert Ellis Jones, formerly president of Hobart College preached from June to December, 1904. Rev. W. H. Robinson from Calais, Maine, was minister in charge of both Ashfield and Shelburne Falls from 1904 to 1906 when he removed to Rouse's Point, New York, and was followed in 1906



by Rev. W. J. Erhard of New York who went in the fall of 1908 to Brownsville, Texas. The present minister, Dr. F. C. H. Wendell, came from Haddam, Conn., in October, 1908.]

C. A. H.

#### UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

From a book. "Records of the First Universalist Church in Ashfield," now preserved in the town clerk's office we gather the following:

Ashfield, September 23, 1840.

Met according to legal notice and formed ourselves into a Religious Society to be called The First Universalist Society of Ashfield.

Over sixty names are signed below the Articles of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws. The principal secretaries were Nelson Gardner, Earl Guilford and John Sprague. Business meetings of the society were held mostly at the houses of the different members and at the store of Gardner & Guilford. Preaching services were held at the Baptist meetinghouse in South Ashfield. In March, 1844, it was "Voted, That we take the South Baptist meeting house at the appraisal of the committee." March 5, 1846, Vote "That we raise money for preaching half the time and that the standing committee contract with Earl Guilford to preach the year ensuing." For four or five years the committee was instructed to contract with Rev. Earl Guilford. In 1852 it was voted that John A. Simpson be sexton and that he have charge of seating strangers and others. The next year it was voted "That the Society accept the Bass Viol presented by the Ladies' Sewing Society, and Eugene Gardner have the care of the Bass Viol to keep it in repair." Also, "That the thanks of this Society be tendered to the Ladies' Society for the Bass Viol and that H. A. Field be a committee to tender the thanks to the Ladies' Sewing Society." In 1860, Voted "That the committee dispose of the Bass Viol at their discretion if any one should wish to purchase."

In March, 1867, "voted that the standing committee make all necessary repairs, and that John Sprague be a committee to procure speakers if there is money raised for that purpose."

In April, 1868, is the last entry in the book which simply records that they met according to notice and voted to adjourn for one year.

Among the preachers employed were Revs. A. W. Mason, Hosea F. Ballou, Earl Guilford, J. A. Kinney, J. Gifford and a Mr. Morton.

The building which they bought of the Baptists and in which they held their meetings is now the South Ashfield Village Hall.

#### METHODISTS

Many years ago a Methodist Chapel was built in the south part of the town near Chapel Falls. It stood on the corner where the guide board and watering trough now are. It was evidently built jointly by the Methodists and the school district, as there were two rooms, with folding doors between, which could be thrown open on Sunday. Here Alvan Clark, the future astronomer and telescope maker, attended the district school and listened to the ministrations from the Methodist pulpit on Sunday.

Rev. Mr. Packard gives a list of twenty-eight ministers who originated from Ashfield, also sketches of the lives of quite a number. Since the publication of his book, two Baptist preachers have gone out from here, Revs. George F. Williams and Wilbur F. Rice. Mr. Packard's book is in the town library, also in a number of private libraries in town. He does not mention Mr. Zachariah Howes, who with his sister, the wife of the Rev. Elijah Bardwell of Goshen, in 1820 went on a mission to the Choctaws and Cherokee Indians. Mr. Howes died in 1837. Rev. William M. Ferry was an early teacher in Sanderson Academy. He married Amanda White, daughter of Thomas White, Esq., and in 1823 he and his wife went as missionaries to northern Michigan. He was superintendent of a very successful Indian mission school on the island of Mackinac for ten years. Their son, Thomas White Ferry, was state representative and senator and for ten years United States senator from Michigan. Mrs. Amanda Hall, now living in town at the age of eighty-three, was the daughter of Rev. William M. Ferry and

was born on Mackinac Island. Noah Henry Ferry, another son, and brother of Mrs. Hall, was a major in a Michigan regiment, and was killed at the battle of Gettysburg, July 3, 1863.

Horace Jenkins, D. D., educated at Colgate University, was born at Spruce Corner, December 13, 1832, went out as missionary from the American Baptist Missionary Union to China in 1859 and continued there for fifty years, until his death in 1909. He translated the Bible into Chinese and was esteemed a faithful and conscientious worker.

Rev. Henry Perry, son of Alvan Perry, Esq., went out in 1866 as missionary to Asiatic Turkey and with the exception of an interim of five years spent in the care of his mother here, has been in constant service up to the present year. Mr. Perry was instructor in a theological seminary there for several years. Miss Sarah Sears, daughter of Rev. Oliver Sears, went to the same country as missionary in 1874. She married Rev. Mr. Smith, an American missionary, who afterwards died. She has been a teacher in the girls' school at Mardin, also was connected with a college at Anatolia. She is still in service. Rev. Robert Hall is noticed in the sketch of the Hall family.



## CHAPTER X

### SCHOOLS

The first action of the Proprietors relating to schools was the drawing of lot No. 54 for the school. This lot, as has been noted, was southwest from the village, beginning on the side hill where Mr. Belding's peach orchard now is and extending south to the Hiram Warren mowing, 160 rods long and 50 wide, the northeast corner being the northwest corner of the Henry Smith pasture.

In the second division of lots in 1763, the hundred acre lot No. 1 was drawn for the school. The northeast corner of this lot is an oak stump near the stream a few rods from what is now E. W. Blakeslee's mill.

The first recorded action by the town of Ashfield relating to schools was in the next year after it was incorporated, when at a town meeting "Held March 31, 1766, By Vartu of a warrant from the Selectmen of sd town it was Voted for the use of the scool 4 pounds." This "Scool" was in Baptist Corner, although we do not know its exact locality. In 1768-9, money was raised for the "School," showing that only one was recognized by the town at that time, but in 1772, it was "Voted: 1, To divide into three school districts. 2, To build three School Houses. 3, That Timothy Lewis, Samuel Belding and Aron Lyon be a committee to build sd houses."

No lines were drawn defining the exact limits of the district until many years after. Previous to about 1800, a vote to divide into, or form new districts, simply meant that so many additional schools be kept with the town's money in certain neighborhoods. The additional schools were probably for the settlers in what is now South Ashfield, "Round School" and the Plain. No notice of the report of this committee appears until five years after, when at a meeting in 1777, it was "Voted, To accept the report of ye Committee that was appointed to divide the town into Districts for Schooling be according to the former

Division without any Alteration saving only that Capt. Cranston's corner of the town Including Six families be a District by itself." "Capt. Cranston's corner of the town" was Spruce Corner.

In 1782, another committee was chosen to superintend the further division of the town into districts, and between that time and 1790, five more were formed, making nine in all. The new ones formed were "Steady Lane," "Briar Hill" including "Chapel" neighborhood, "Cape Street," "Northwest," and "Wardville" or the William Gray neighborhood. These districts were organized by the proper officers, and in due time schoolhouses were built. Usually, for a time, schools were kept in private houses. To show how the business was done we quote from some old papers kindly furnished by the Yeomans descendants.

Due for School wood to Esqr Phillips half Cord	0- 2-0
Due to Levi Steal for 1 Cord and $\frac{2}{3}$	0- 7-0
Dr to Ensigh Andros 1 Cord $\frac{1}{3}$	0- 5-0
Dr to Elijah Phillips for half Cord of wood	0- 2-0
Dr to Silas Lille Juner for half Cord of wood	0- 2-0
Dr to Jonathan Yemans for 8 Cords of wood	1-12-0
Dr more for thee use of his house two months and two thirds of a month for School house	0-10-0
	<hr/>
	3- 0-0

to Doct Phineas Bartlet town treasurer }  
 pleas to pay the several sums above as car- } School Committee  
 ryed out against their names }

Jonathan Yemans  
 Davis Butler

Ashfield May the 16 A D 1792

The school was kept in the house where Joseph Tatro now lives, probably then just built. It will be seen that  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cords of wood were used in the old fashioned fireplace. Barnabas Anable was paid £7-4s for teaching the two and two-thirds months. From the following notice it appears that a school-house was built the next season.



to Jonathan Yemans Clerk of the Schol Destrict Called Esqr  
Phillipses or the north middle Destrict you are Directed to warn  
Said Destrict that they meet at the house Built by Simeon  
Crittenden for a School house on Tuesday the 10 Day of De-  
cember furstly to chose a moderator to manage Said meeting  
2ly to Se If the proprietors will Except of Said house and 3ly  
to Do ancy other Bisness that Shall Be thot proper to be dun on  
Said Day

Ashfield Desember the Sixth AD 1793

Levi Steel  
Davis Butler                      commite  
Jonathan Yemans

the within Naned have Bin warned to meet at the time  
and place within mentioned

by me Jonathan Yemans Clerk

It looks as if the business was faithfully and systematically  
done, even if the spelling, capitals, and so on were somewhat at  
fault.

In 1810 the Chapel district was formed from a part of Briar  
Hill, and in 1813 Beldenville was formed by taking portions of  
Baptist Corner and Wardville. Schools were kept in private  
houses in New Boston soon after this, but no schoolhouse was  
built there until 1823, when it was built on its present location.

In 1815, South Ashfield district was formed, the schoolhouse  
standing near where Clarence Guilford now lives.

In 1845, the Apple Valley district appears as the fourteenth,  
with the "little red schoolhouse" on the corner of the Apple  
Valley road.

In 1782, the first school in Steady Lane was kept in a house  
which stood on the corner where the Orville Hall house, occupied  
by Clarence E. Hall, now stands, with Miss Keziah Taylor as  
teacher. Afterwards the school was moved to a house on the  
corner near the creamery, then it was moved again to the corner  
just below Allison Howes' house, where it burned down.  
Another was built in the same place which stood until 1851,  
when a new one was built which stood there till 1883, when this  
and the Cape Street schools having united, it was moved to its  
present location.

The dwelling house of Ezekiel Howes, which stood opposite the barn of Henry and Abbott Howes, harbored the first school in the Northwest. Then a schoolhouse was built at the foot of the hill below John W. Howes' near the house of Daniel Forbes. About 1837, it was moved to the top of the hill about forty rods east of the Henry Howes place. Some twenty years later, it was moved fifty rods to the west, where it remained until 1886, when "Northwest" and "Apple Valley" having united, it made another migration and now rests peacefully in Apple Valley.

The schoolhouse on Briar Hill first stood on the old road west of the house of Alvan Cross, and when the new road was built in 1827, it was moved to its present location.

The schoolhouse in Chapel district formerly stood on the old road running past the C. F. Howes house, now owned by Professor Cockaday, to the Blood, now the Miss Collis place, and was afterwards built on the corner below the Hitchcock—Mrs. Marshall—place. It was built to serve also as a Methodist Chapel.

The Round schoolhouse was a part of the house in which Frank Hillman now lives. It was, as its name indicates, perfectly round, built of brick and considered in its time a model schoolhouse. Eugene C. Gardner, now the well-known Springfield architect, and an Ashfield boy of sixty years ago, thus describes it:

The old round schoolhouse, "The Round" as we always called it for short, was undoubtedly *sui generis*. I do not believe there ever was another schoolhouse like it in this world. I doubt if there will be in the next. Yes, I went to school there, when the scholars sat on a plank bench with their backs against the edge of the continuous counter that hung against the outer wall, part of the time and "whopped around" for writing, ciphering, or any work involving the use of large books. I doubt if any other plan was ever contrived for putting a greater number of children into a similar space and so grouped that each one could face the music, that is to say the teacher. One winter, I think about 1848, there were between sixty and seventy on the record, eight from the Leonard family alone, (no twins), and I should guess that the list of absentees was a small one.

Several years ago I had memorandums of the exact dimensions of the building but am not sure that I can find them. I also have a small photograph. It is my impression that the outside measurement was twenty-one or twenty-two feet in diameter, but would not be sure, without verification.

Extending around the inside of the outer wall except where it is cut off by the door, was a raised platform perhaps one foot in height and four or five feet wide. Attached to the wall under the windows was a sloping shelf, perhaps one and a half feet in width and in front of that shelf, a wooden bench of plank. The front edge of this platform constituted the seat for the younger pupils, and there was a sort of railing about one foot high and perhaps one foot from the edge, which made a back for the inner circle of seats, serving at the same time as a foot rest for the older scholars behind them. Whether the heads of the youngsters or the feet of the older ones had the right of way was not always clear. It is my impression that when the big boys stood up on the platform there was not a great deal of room to spare between their heads and the ceiling.

There were three windows,—one north, one south, and one east. On the west side, protected by a small outside porch possibly six feet square was the entrance door. In this porch at each side were shelves where the boys and girls were expected to pile their caps and mufflers, hoods and shawls. Overcoats and overshoes for children had not then been invented. In this little lobby was a small window toward the north with a wooden shutter, which had a round hole in it about as big as a bung hole, and when both doors were shut, we had a most fascinating camera obscura. The spectators sat on the top shelf at the north side, the performers performed with colored shawls and other stage properties on the bank outside the building, the moving picture appearing on the under side of the sloping ceiling. Adjacent to this porch and extending west was the small woodshed which was open toward the south. I cannot recall any other out buildings except the back side of the woodshed.

The teacher's headquarters were at the left side of the door on entering; his furniture being the end of the sloping shelf, under which was a small drawer. The inner circle or pit, which corresponded to the arena in the Roman amphitheatre, must have been as much as ten feet in diameter, possibly twelve. At the very centre was a stove for burning wood, mostly green, and it is my impression that the stove pipe ran straight up through the ceiling, a small, round, iron pipe through a big, square, wooden hole. The round pipe carried the smoke, or a part of

it, out of doors, the square hole allowed the bad air of the school to rise into the attic, from which, after getting cooled off, it came down again. It seems unlikely that the chimney could have stood on the apex of the cone of the roof, and it may be that the pipes ran horizontally to one side, either under or over the sheathing.

As I remember the windows (there may have been four instead of three), they could not have been over two and one-half feet wide by four or four and one-half feet high. Probably one or more was left unchanged when the addition was made.

The teacher's corner, if a circle can be said to have a corner, was not only the source of knowledge but it was the seat of justice and the court of execution. The good old-fashioned ferrule was the familiar instrument of discipline. In fact, when there was a full house, there was hardly room to swing the birch effectively without endangering the occupants of the orchestra chairs. Although I remember one occasion on which the school master found it necessary in modern slang, to "wipe up the floor" with one of the big boys, in which performance the stove pipe was knocked down and a reign of terror inaugurated with plenty of vocal music from the front row. About a square yard of the floor at the right of the teacher was the rostrum where we stood to read our compositions and "speak our pieces."

Surely it was an interesting building and the center of a culture the circumference of which is not yet determined.

This house was built by Mr. Gardner's grandfather, Jacob Gardner. Fifty, sixty, or seventy scholars were not unusual numbers for a winter school eighty years ago. Mr. Henry Taylor says that seventy-eight was the largest number that he remembers packed in the little Cape Street schoolhouse in one winter. We have no record of the whole number of scholars in town until 1833, when in the first returns made to the state there were 635 between 4 and 21 years of age; in 1840, 494; 1845, 464; 1850, 380; 1855, 348; 1860, 253; 1865, 232; 1870, 233. In 1837, 546 scholars are reported as attending the thirteen schools in winter. These were kept an aggregate of 82 months in a year, or about an average of  $6\frac{1}{3}$  months each. \$600 was raised for schools, and \$550 contributed in board, wood, and so forth. The valuation of the town was called \$280,808. Wages of female teachers was reckoned \$5.50 a month and board the

same. The following sums of money have been voted for support of schools:

1766, £4; 1769, £9; 1773, £15; 1779, £500; 1788, £100; 1789, £40; 1790, £80; 1791 to 1794 inc., £100; 1796, £150; 1797, £125; 1798 to 1801 inc., \$400; 1802 to 1807 inc., \$450; 1808, \$400; 1809, 1810, \$450; 1811, 1812, \$500; 1813, \$550; 1814 to 1839 inc., \$600; 1840, \$800; 1841 to 1843 inc., \$600; 1844 to 1849 inc., \$700; 1850, \$850; 1851, \$800; 1852 to 1854 inc., \$850; 1855 to 1863 inc., \$1,000; 1864, 1865, \$1,500; 1866, \$1,250; 1867 to 1869 inc., \$1,500; 1870, \$2,000; from 1870 to 1876, \$1,500; 1876, 1877, 1878, \$1,750; from 1878 to 1886, \$1,600; 1886, \$1,475 for schools and \$200 for text books; 1887 to 1890, \$1,500 for schools and \$100 for supplies; 1890 to 1893, \$1,400 for schools, \$500 for high school; 1893 to raise \$2,000 for school purposes and that the school committee be authorized and instructed to use an additional sum not to exceed \$250 for the support of the high school; 1894, \$1,750, \$500 of which must be for high school; 1895, \$2,000 for school purposes and to continue high school; 1896 and 1897, \$1,500 for schools and \$750 for high school; 1898, \$1,800 for schools, \$750 for high school; 1899, \$1,650 for schools, \$750 for high school; 1900 to 1904, \$1,500 for common schools with \$300 in 1901 for superintendent and \$750 for high school annually to present time. In 1904-5-6-7, \$1,700 raised for common schools and in 1907 committee instructed to pay the teachers monthly. In 1908 and 1909, \$1,850 was raised.

This money which was raised at first was probably expended by the selectmen or committee chosen by the town, upon each district at their discretion, but in 1788, it was "Voted, that the money be distributed in the several school districts according to the number of scholars from 4 years of age to 21 years of age." This method was continued until 1841, when it was voted to divide two-thirds of the money on the scholars and one-third on the districts. Not long after, a vote was taken to divide one-half on the scholars and one-half on the districts. In 1882, it was "Voted to place the school money in the hands of the school committee to be expended by them at their discretion."



An old provincial law, and an act of 1789, made it the duty of the selectmen and ministers of the gospel to care for and visit the schools, but the records are silent as to any supervision being exercised until March, 1816, when it was

“Voted, That Elijah Paine, Esq., Joshua Howes, Jr., Joseph Barber, Alvan Clark, Peter Sears, Ahira Sears, Daniel Williams, Henry Bassett, Ebenezer Furbush, David Lyon, John Alden, Bethuel Lilly and Samuel Shepherd be a committee to visit the schools the year ensuing, and to request the said committee to invite the clergy to visit the schools with them.”

In 1818 it was “Voted that the school committee do visit the schools twice this season.”

In 1819, March 1st, it was “Voted that Elijah Paine, Henry Bassett and James McFarland be a committee to report to the town the best method of visiting schools and examining teachers.”

The votes which were taken in the early part of the century show a deep and progressive interest in the schools. Towns were not required by law to choose a school committee until 1826, so that these votes were in anticipation of the law. In 1827 it was voted “to take the *Journal of Education*, published at Boston, for the use of the School Committee.” The town was also one of the earliest pioneers in the matter of choosing women upon the school board. In 1855, nineteen years before the state passed the act making women eligible to the office, two women were elected on the school board.

From 1830 to 1836, there seems to have been considerable discussion as to whether the School Committee should receive compensation for their services.

In 1835, it was voted to accept the report of a committee chosen to investigate the matter, which report was “that no compensation be allowed them, except to their Clerk, who shall receive \$2.00 per year.” Since 1838, the statutes have fixed the salary of the committee.

The following persons have served as School Committee for the number of years indicated, their names following in the order of their first election, beginning with the year 1816:



Elijah Paine, Esq., 5; Joshua Howes, Jr., 1; Joseph Barber, 3; Alvan Clark, 3; Peter Sears, 1; Ahira Sears, 1; Daniel Williams, 7; Henry Bassett, Esq., 9; Ebenezer Furbush, 1; David Lyon, 2; John Alden, 1; Samuel Shepherd, 1; Capt. Bethuel Lilly, 4; Dr. Enos Smith, 2; Dorus Graves, 1; Reuben Bement, 1; Lemuel Sears, 1; Dimmick Ellis, 3; Enos Harvey, 3; Charles Williams, 2; Roswell Williams, 1; Capt. James McFarland, 7; Dr. Atherton Clark, 6; Samuel Bement, 5; Sanford Boice, 4; Anson Bement, 1; Elias Gray, 1; Anson Goodwin, 1; Israel Williams, 1; Cyrus Alden, 5; Russell Phillips, 1; Elisha Wing, 1; Rufus Bement, 1; Rev. Orra Martin, 8; Rev. Lot Jones, 1; John Pease, 1; Walter Guilford, 1; Jasper Bement, 1; John C. Baldwin, 2; Charles Adams, 1; Horace Cole, 4; Jonathan Yeamans, 1; Rev. Mr. Withington, 1; Rev. Thomas Shepard, 4; Wait Bement, 17; Robert A. Coffin, 1; Dr. Jared Bement, 3; Alvan Perry, 15; Rev. Silas Blaisdale, 1; Hiram Belding, 3; Daniel Forbes, 1; William Bassett, 1; Sumner Bement, 1; Manly Guilford, 4; Samuel Bassett, 6; Earl J. Merriam, 1; Rev. Burr Baldwin, 2; Rev. Jacob Pierson, 2; Rev. S. D. Clark, 2; Rev. Earl Guilford, 2; Rev. William Norris, 2; Frederic Forbes, 13; Granville B. Hall, 6; Dr. Sidney Brooks, 4; Silas Blake, 12; Rev. J. A. Stone, 2; Nathan Knowlton, 4; Joshua Knowlton, 4; F. G. Howes, 42; Miss Lydia Hall, 4; Miss Marietta Patrick, 1; William F. Bassett, 1; Rev. Edward Clark, 1; Rev. Willard Brigham, 2; L. C. Sanderson, 1; Levant F. Gray, 2; Francis E. Elmer, 3; Dr. J. R. Fairbanks, 1; Charles A. Hall, 10; Rev. Lewis Green, 5; Rev. George Willard, 3; John M. Sears, 4; Mrs. Amelia S. Ford, 15; Charles Fisk, 2; George B. Church, 10; Rev. William Libby, 3; Dr. J. E. Urquhart, 15; Mrs. Effie G. Gardner, 8; Mrs. May G. Boice, 4; Charles Howes, 2.

Among the early teachers employed were: Dimick Ellis; Daniel Forbes, who taught ninety-nine terms, including writing and singing schools; Nancy Alden; Mary Lyon; Electa Lyon; Betsey Smith; Lydia Bassett Smith; Hiram Belding, father of Belding Brothers, silk manufacturers; Alvan Perry; Samuel Bassett; Manly Guilford; Wait Bement; P. Emory Aldrich, afterwards Judge Aldrich of Worcester; H. L. Dawes, afterwards United States senator; Granville B. Hall, father of President G. Stanley Hall of Clark University; and later, Misses Lydia and Clarissa Hall; Miss Marietta P. Patrick,

afterwards Mrs. Harris; Miss Mehitable Bassett, afterwards Mrs. Chauncey Bryant of Greenfield; Miss Eliza Packard, afterwards Mrs. L. E. Coleman.

Miss Lydia Hall, afterwards Mrs. Miles, probably had the longest experience of any Ashfield teacher and most strongly impressed her individuality upon her pupils. One of the leading men of our town who died a few years since said, "I got more from Miss Hall than from all my other teachers in the common school." Her old pupils living and many others will be glad to see her "Reminiscences," written in her ninetieth year, quoted here so freely. Since 1875, Mrs. Amelia Ford has been largely employed as teacher in our common and high schools.

Many of the teachers mentioned in the early years were men and women of character and ability, and afterwards made their mark as useful citizens of this and other states. Sometimes an odd genius for a teacher would drift in from other parts. Mrs. Miles tells of hearing in her young days the older people talk of old Master Cole who was at one time a teacher in the Steady Lane school. He was an Englishman and claimed to have been an officer in the army. It was said he made his morning prayer with one eye open and if any sly urchin saw fit to try to "cut up" he was liable to get a thump from the master's cane without seeming to disturb the thread of his devotions. Once during school hours in a fit of impatience he rushed upon the scholars in a certain part of the room with such fury that the seats were quickly emptied through doors and windows, to escape the blows of his descending cane. He always sent word to his boarding places that he wanted "boiled victuals" for supper and woolen sheets on his bed. In a sketch of early Conway is mentioned an old Master Cole, evidently the same, who used to wear his uniform and sword into the schoolroom, which inspired the pupils with fear lest at some time in a fit of his impatience they might find themselves headless.

The literary qualifications of the teacher were not always of the highest order. Since the middle of the last century, a teacher (from another county) imparted the astounding geographical information that from the meetinghouse on Peru

(Mass.) hill the water from the east side ran into the Atlantic Ocean, and from the west side into the Pacific Ocean.

The teachers of the olden time with seventy-five or eighty pupils ranging from five to twenty-one years crowded into a small schoolroom had no enviable task. If the teacher had tact and was popular with the pupils, his path might be comparatively smooth, but woe unto him if he lacked "government," or by his course incurred the enmity of those under him. Then there might be incipient mutiny and talk of carrying out the master and pitching him into a snowdrift, which was sometimes actually done. Hence committees, when in search of a teacher for a "hard school," took in the physical, as well as the mental and moral status of the candidate.

Notwithstanding all the criticism and ridicule that has been made of the old district system, there were many good features about it. Each district was a little republic in itself. At the annual and other meetings the moderator, clerk, prudential committees and other special committees were chosen so that the humblest citizen at some time in his life would have a chance to serve the public in some office, however small it might be. The general good of the district and the qualifications of the teachers were discussed, and frequently prudential committees were instructed by vote to hire certain teachers, so that every man felt he had a voice in the direction of the school. When the teacher was hired and the time came for the summer term, the teacher "boarded around," cheerfully walking a mile or a mile and a half to her boarding place, reserving the nearer places for the rainy nights. When winter came and the large boys flocked in, a "man teacher" was usually employed. He, too, "boarded around" and after the pork and beef were slaughtered, the sausages and mince pies made, he was welcome to the full larder.

Many a pleasant evening was spent in chats with the old people, and in helping the children with their "sums" around the table, lighted by a tallow candle. And when the retiring hour came, what though the air and sheets in that northeast square room were of zero temperature, the hot bricks gave him

a warmth like that of the hearts of the parents who wished him the kindly "good night" and pleasant dreams. These frequent visits of the teachers to the parental roof gave them an insight into the home life of their pupils, their government there, and much else that widened their views and gave them preparation for better influence in their work. It established also a close bond of sympathy between parent and teacher. The good dames of the district made frequent visits of an afternoon with their knitting into the school, while on the closing or "examination day" half the women of the district with a good sprinkling of the men were often present. The people of the district boarded the teacher and furnished the fuel, the boys "took turns" at building the fires, and the girls the same also in the care of the schoolroom. Not infrequently, when it was thought they were having a good school, money was raised by subscription for an extension or poll school. The early returns to the Board of Education show that as much was given in voluntary contributions by the districts, as was furnished by the town.

The spelling schools were interesting occasions. They chose sides and spelled down, there being a great strife on each side to get the best spellers. Sometimes the old folks spelled against the young folks with the understanding that only Webster's spelling book should be used.

Sometimes the school in one district would challenge another to a spelling match and the little schoolhouse would be packed with contestants and spectators.

Old fashioned lyceums were held in most of the districts in the winter. Outside talent was sometimes imported as a stimulus to the native element. Lot Bassett of Spruce Corner, Bela Gardner and Elijah Field of South Ashfield, Marcus T. Parker of Cape Street and Manly Guilford, were considered the star debaters of the town and were often called in to enliven the debates in the different districts. A paper and a critique were read and the questions were vigorously and intelligently discussed, the village library being frequently drawn upon for sources of information. All, both old and young, were en-

couraged to take a part. "Ought American Slavery to be Abolished?" was a question much discussed. It is related of a lyceum in New Boston that a citizen of that locality desiring to contribute his share to the support of the lyceum, made his maiden effort on this question thus: "Mr. President, regarding this question before the house, I believe that slavery is—I believe sir, that slavery is—that slavery is—that slavery is—is—a cussed thing," and took his seat. Before the winter was over, however, he became a substantial and helpful debater. Some of the graduates of these district lyceums from the "back towns" have sometimes well held their own in the state legislature against some of their fellow members supposed to have received much better educational advantages. Although without the state paternalism of the present day, there was a kind of self educational, intellectual and social life and vigor in these old-fashioned school districts that should have due commendation.

In the Easy Chair of *Harper's Monthly* for October, 1867, Mr. Curtis writes of a visit to the Steady Lane school which was then on the corner below where Allison Howes now lives.

And certainly there is no more striking and interesting sight than the common school in a remote country district. Let it be a summer afternoon, bright and not too warm. The school house, cheerfully painted white, stands upon a pleasant green where roads meet at the foot of a high green hill. There is nothing squalid or repulsive about the house, although it is very plain and the neighborhood is not rich. There is no "yard" for the green roads and the fields and hillsides are sufficient playground. It is the last day of the summer term, and the parents of the children and the friends of the children are invited and expected to come. The door and windows are all open, and the summer air plays as it will throughout the room. There are twenty scholars, the largest part girls, and the oldest of all about fifteen, the youngest six years old. They sit at separate solid wooden desks, and against the wall in front of them sit fathers and mothers, and in the teacher's desk the "school committee man," with a winning smile and kind voice which should be enough to take all the sting out of "school."

The teacher, a young woman not yet twenty, calls up the little classes. They respond promptly, each answering to his



number, filing into the space between the desks, and seating himself with folded arms upon the recitation bench. Each in turn rises and recites. Through reading, spelling, arithmetic, geography, they wind their way, staggering and tripping a little from bashfulness in the presence of strangers; but the smallest girls and boys pipe their replies in a ringing treble, and spell out the hard words in one syllable, and even two syllables, with a readiness and accuracy which are remarkable. The older children figure out really intricate sums upon the blackboard, and one, the oldest, shows a ready knowledge of the elements of physiology. The school committee man in his kind way, quietly asks questions not in the book, simple problems, although the little folks rather shiver at these questions "out of his head," but they answer so as to show that they have not learned by rote merely, but do actually understand what they have studied.

One of the visitors looks at a boy who is helpful at home, who can mow, and hoe, and milk, and do a hundred necessary chores, yet is a little fellow still, and will try to catch him. "What is the capital of Kentucky?" Certainly the boy will say Louisville. But he promptly answers "Frankfort." "What is the capital of Louisiana?" "Baton Rouge." "What is the largest city in Ohio?" "Cincinnati." Here is a little shaver whose father came from Ireland some years since, and settled among the country hills. He is just six years old, and he spells so nimbly that even a school committee man might be surprised.

They are evidently hearty, merry children, who do not creep like snails unwillingly to school, who are not driven, but wisely led. They have picked in their gardens the bright flowers which are in the bowl upon the stove, and in the metal tumbler on the teacher's desk. They have studied well, they have learned a great deal, yet school is a pleasant place. It is kept for six months in the year only, except when there may be a subscription school, for the children are needed at home, and among these remote hills the farmer's family is his help as well as his pride and joy.

This is the beginning of their citizenship. These are the roots of American civilization. This is the work which the reflective spectator of the frame school house in the Paris Exposition meditates.

It may be interesting to note the distances scholars were obliged to travel to school. For a time when there were six families in Spruce Corner they were obliged to send their children to the Plain school; then a log schoolhouse was built on



the old road south of where Wells and Charles Taylor now live. The Steady Lane district extended northerly to the Buckland line, so that the children of Jonathan Howes, four in number, had to walk from what is now the lower end of the state road near Charles Howes' up past David Williams', now F. H. Smith's, to the schoolhouse on the corner near Allison Howes'. David Williams had a large family of children who went to the same school. As has been noted, Briar Hill schoolhouse stood midway between the two roads east of Alvan Cross' house and for a time the children on what are now the Underhill and Ward farms went to school there. Two or three miles were sometimes tramped and no bills were presented for "Conveyance of Pupils."

In the early days before the limits and organization of the districts were defined and completed, school sites were sometimes changed with scant formal proceedings. It is related that in the Northwest neighborhood, the schoolhouse was at the foot of the hill near the Buckland line, but the people on the hill thought the house "had been there long enough" so one day they gathered their teams together and went down and drew the building to the top of the hill nearly half a mile farther south, this without vote or order from any authority.

To show the way our schools were managed eighty years ago we give a few verbatim extracts from the District account book for South Ashfield.

Joseph Barber school committee for the year 1824.

Hired Minerva A. Bennett to teach the school sixteen weeks at 4s. (66 $\frac{2}{3}$ c.) per week to begin the first Monday in May 1824.

January 29, 1825, Received the school order \$31.54.

Jan. 29, Paid M. A. Bennett \$10.67.

1825, March 1, Paid George Hexford \$20.

May 1825 Anson Goodwin School Committee.

Rec. of Joseph Barber \$0.87 district money.

Hired Eliza Barber to teach school twenty Weeks at \$0.75 per week to begin first Monday in May. The district voted to pay 16 weeks out of town order, the other four by poll.

Rec. of Abner Rogers \$5.92.

Paid G. Hexford \$7.00.

Hired Flora Graves to teach school eight weeks at 75cts per week.

Jan. 1825 Rec. the town order \$31.54.

June 15, Paid Flora Graves \$6.00.

June 20, Paid Eliza Barber \$9.00, \$6 for town order, \$3 for poll.

Nov. Mr. Stephen Hayward was hired to teach school 3 months at \$12 per month to be paid by the town money, 1 by poll.

Apr. 3. Paid Mr. Hayward \$19.33 town's money and \$12 for poll school.

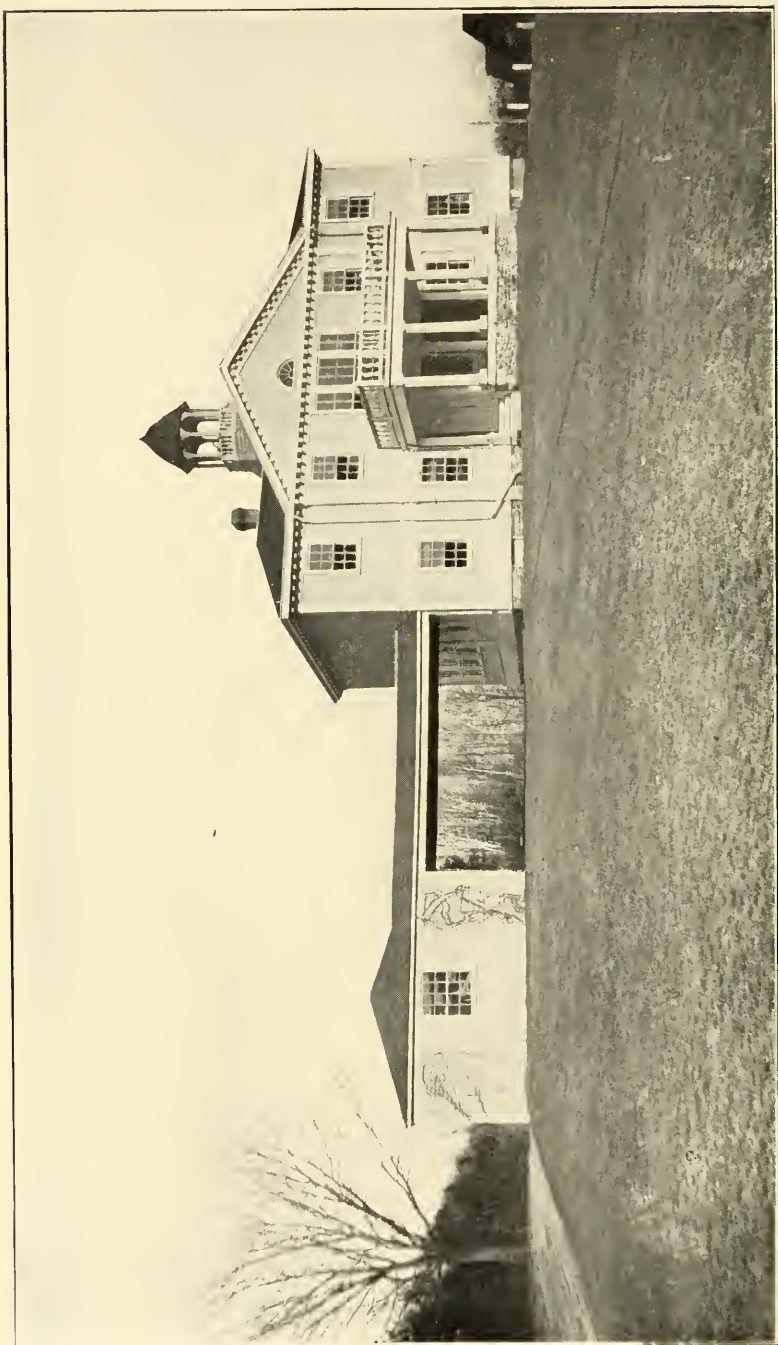
1826, May, Hired Louisa Rice to teach school 20 weeks for 75 a week.

Sept. Hired Louisa Rice to teach a poll school 8 weeks for 75 cts per week.

Board and wood were contributed by the district.

In 1827 Samuel Bassett taught the winter school for \$12 per month.





SANDERSON ACADEMY ASHFIELD.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ACADEMY AND LIBRARY

Sanderson Academy was established by the Rev. Alvan Sanderson in 1816. It is doubtful if previous to this there was any school of higher grade than a common school. Mr. Sanderson had been pastor of the Congregational Church for eight years, when his health failing, he resigned his pastorate and opened this school. He continued the superintendence of it only a year, when he died. At his death it was found that he had left a fund of about \$1,500 for the support of the school. Mr. Sanderson was only thirty-six years of age at the time of his death, but the proofs of his self-sacrifice and disinterestedness come down to us in so many ways, that his memory should not be forgotten by the people of this town.

The board of trustees was organized soon after Mr. Sanderson's death and was incorporated in 1821 under the name of the "Trustees of the Sanderson Academy and School Fund." Flourishing schools were held for ten or twelve years after this. Up to 1832, nearly one thousand pupils had attended the school from this and adjoining towns. Mary Lyon entered the school as a pupil in 1817, and was afterwards employed as teacher for several years, mainly as assistant, but for several terms in 1827 and 1828 as principal. In 1832, there seemed to be a decline of interest in the school. The fund left by Mr. Sanderson was nearly all spent in repairs on the building and in other ways, and there is no record of trustees' meetings for three years. In 1834, the interest revived somewhat, and from that time to 1866, meetings of the trustees were kept up and schools maintained for the whole or part of the school year. After 1866 no meetings of the trustees were held for eleven years, although there were one or two terms of school held each year—some very successful, usually as a private enterprise. In 1877, Professor Charles Eliot Norton and George William Curtis, who some years before had established their summer homes in Ashfield, endeavored to

awaken an interest in the neglected institution. The records were hunted up, the board of trustees reorganized, and Professor Norton placed upon the board. Money was raised by subscription for repairing the building, Messrs. Norton and Curtis heading the list each with a liberal sum. The school was opened in the fall of 1879 and has had three full terms each year up to the present time.

The first decade of the Academy seems to have been a very prosperous one. The trustees were fortunate in 1817 in securing Elihu Burritt for a teacher and Mary Lyon as a pupil. Mr. Burritt was an excellent teacher and a man of scholarly attainments. He was the author of a "Logarithmetick" and "Burritt's Geography of the Heavens," an excellent class book on astronomy. The worth of Miss Lyon was early discovered and she was employed as preceptress in 1822. She continued in the school as assistant or principal for a portion of the time until the spring of 1828, after that teaching in Buckland several terms. It is doubtful if any teacher in Sanderson ever created such a moral and intellectual awakening as Miss Lyon. The impetus given to education by this and her Buckland schools must have been marked. Teachers from surrounding towns, by recommendation of Colonel Leavitt and other friends of education, came to her school to learn the best methods of instruction. Miss Lyon writes that there is much interest in education and that she has visitors to her school almost daily. It is evident her heart was in the school and that she was sensible of the favors received from the family of Esquire White, with whom she made her home, and also from the other trustees. In 1823, when assistant with Mr. Converse, she writes: "The academy in which I am now engaged is an infant institution. The founder, Rev. Alvan Sanderson, was governed by the purest motives and I consider it a privilege to aid in carrying out his benevolent design. Many of its present guardians are my friends and from them I have received many favors. This is the school where I was principally educated, and to which I feel in no small degree indebted." And on leaving the school in 1828, she writes: "I find that this academy, where I have



received so much instruction and where I have labored so much from time to time, has taken a firmer hold of my affections than I had supposed. It seems like bidding an old friend farewell, whom I do not expect to meet again." In the three biographies of Miss Lyon by Fidelia Fisk, Dr. Edward Hitchcock, and that of Miss Gilchrist recently published, full accounts are given of her life in Ashfield.

An advertisement in the *Hampshire Gazette* of October 24, 1827, reads:

Sanderson Academy—The winter term of fourteen weeks in this Academy commencing on the 10th of December next, will be devoted exclusively to the instruction of FEMALES, under the care of Miss Mary Lyon. The course of instruction will be essentially the same as was pursued the last winter, with the addition of Chirography. The price of board, including fuel and lights, from \$1.17 to \$1.25. Tuition for the whole term of fourteen weeks, \$3.50, to be paid at entrance.

As the course of instruction, though short, will be systematic, it is important that the pupils should enter at the commencement.

After Miss Lyon's withdrawal from the school Mr. Robert A. Coffin taught about two years. In his catalogue of the term ending November, 1829, he says: "In the course of instruction pursued in this Institution, the three principal objects of attention are, fitting young gentlemen for college, furnishing well qualified instructors for our common schools, and disciplining the minds and increasing the information of those who connect themselves with us, without intending to pursue extensively a literary course." Mr. Coffin was an excellent teacher, as some now living can testify. He was the author of a very original and practical text book on Natural Philosophy.

Up to this time probably nearly one thousand different pupils had attended this school. A note in one of the treasurer's bills at the close of the year 1826, says that six hundred and twenty pupils have attended this school. Of these, two hundred and fifteen were from out of town, seventeen had fitted for college, and forty-five had become teachers.

The records are somewhat meagre for quite a portion of the time up to 1879, when the board of trustees was reorganized, but we give the names of nearly if not all the teachers employed up to that time. Some were employed for one term, others for several.

Rev. Alvan Sanderson, Elijah H. Burritt, Abijah Cross, Mary Lyon, Amasa Converse, A. Clark, B. B. Edwards, Horatio Flagg, Hannah White, Joseph Ladd, Robert A. Coffin, Rev. Lot Jones, Rev. Silas Blaisdell, P. Emory Aldrich, Mr. Humphrey, Ephraim Leonard, Rev. Francis Williams, Mr. Bonney, Horatio M. Porter, Henry L. Dawes, W. W. Mitchell, Rev. Hyman A. Wilder, Alden Porter Beals, Rev. Wilbur F. Loomis, Rev. William A. Lloyd, Abner T. Sherwin, Dr. E. R. Wheeler, Dr. Daniel M. Priest, Frederick G. Howes, B. Ellsworth Smith, Miss Sarah Stone, Miss Nettie Wilson, Miss Sarah Forbes, Mrs. W. E. Ford, Miss Lydia Hall.

The late United States Senator Dawes taught in the spring and fall of 1841. Mr. Dawes leaves the record of a good disciplinarian. It is related by one of his scholars that when one of the smart village boys attempted to play one of his favorite tricks upon the teacher, a nervy arm seized his collar and laid him in a horizontal position so suddenly that, as he afterwards expressed it, he didn't know how he came there. After Mr. Dawes came W. W. Mitchell, afterwards a prized teacher in the Chicopee High School and Hopkins' Academy of Hadley. It is evident that Mr. Dawes and Mr. Mitchell appreciated at least a portion of their school, for each of them took a wife to himself from among his pupils, Senator Dawes marrying Electa, daughter of Chester Sanderson, and Mr. Mitchell, Lucy, daughter of Anson Goodwin.

Later Hyman A. Wilder, afterwards missionary to South Africa; Alden Porter Beals, since a successful teacher of high schools in Connecticut; Wilbur F. Loomis, a popular and much loved teacher for several terms, afterwards pastor of the Congregational Church at Shelburne Falls; W. A. Lloyd; Abner T. Sherwin and others have been employed. In 1871, Mr. Mitchell

assisted by Miss Lydia Hall, now Mrs. Miles, taught a successful school, the fall term numbering sixty pupils.

The first trustees of the institution were no common men. As the description comes down to us, it must have been a notable gathering when they rode into the village to attend the meetings in the humble academy building. The scholarly and dignified Rev. Joseph Field of Charlemont, the devout Rev. Josiah Spaulding of Buckland, the respectable Esquire Billings of Conway, Gen. Thomas Longley of Hawley, "a General and gentleman everywhere, and never off duty," the lawyer, Esq. Paine, the town magistrates, Esq. White and Esq. Williams, and the state senator, Dr. Enos Smith. An old lady ends her description of these men, "Why! There were giants in those days." Among the trustees added soon after its incorporation were Rev. Theophilus Packard of Shelburne, Rev. Moses Miller of Heath, Rev. Edward Hitchcock of Conway, afterwards president of Amherst College, Dr. Atherton Clark, Rev. Thomas Shepard, Asa Sanderson, Dimock Ellis and Samuel Bement of Ashfield. Trustees afterwards chosen were Hiram Belding, Sanford Boice, Samuel W. Hall, Moses Cook, Alvan Perry, Esq. Mr. Perry was active in the repairs of the Academy in 1854, as was also A. W. Crafts, another of the trustees. H. S. Ranney, Esq., served continuously on the board for forty-five years and was for twenty years its President. Rev. Lewis Green, late of Greenfield, was for a number of years on the board and was a warm friend of the Academy.

Among the men who received their early education at this Academy are twenty-nine who became ministers, and four at least who became lawyers. Many of these fitted for college here. Some of those who became preachers were Alvah Lilly, William Bement, Rufus B. Bement, Elijah Paine, William P. Paine, John C. Paine, John Alden, Melzar Parker, Hart Pease, Adiel Harvey, Charles S. Porter, Morris E. White, Francis Williams, Oliver M. Sears, also Leonard Bement, Willis Ranney, Francis Gillette, lawyers, and Alonzo Lilly, a successful business man, all from Ashfield. The students from Hawley who became preachers were Alfred Longley, Moses Longley, Rufus

Taylor, Timothy Taylor. Other students who entered the ministry were Benjamin F. Brown, William Williams and Alvan Stone of Goshen, John R. Bigelow of Cummington, Jeremiah Pomeroy of Southampton, Jeremiah Hall and Orrin Johnson of Colrain, Levi H. Corson, Shelburne, Erastus Dickenson of Plainfield, and Lebbeus Rood of Buckland. Later came Joseph Hall, for twenty-five years principal of the Hartford High School; Rev. Henry C. Perry, missionary to Turkey; Rev. Robert Hall, late of Somerville, Mass.; Eugene C. Gardner, Springfield's esteemed architect; and last, but not least, Dr. G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University.

At the Ashfield centennial, forty-five years ago, there were many kind and appreciative words for the institution, from men who had been its pupils. The historian, Rev. Dr. William P. Paine, said: "Many residents of this and other towns, in the early and palmy days of the institution, availed themselves of its privileges, and a speedy change in good order, intelligence and intellectual aspirations was marked. Many were prepared for college who have served in the various professions and in business with honor and success. The good influence of this enterprise has been quite manifest in the town for the last half century. It now has many sons and daughters ready to rise up and do it homage."

To revive the interest in this old and honored institution and to place it again upon a permanent footing was a problem over which Messrs. Norton and Curtis labored. The narrow path across the lot from one summer house to the other was well worn by the frequent visits back and forth, and with other and broader subjects, plans for the little Academy were often discussed. To repair the old and dilapidated academy building which stood opposite the hotel, seemed to be the first thing to do. A paper was left at one of the stores to receive subscriptions for that object. After remaining there several weeks with only a few dollars on the paper it was sent for by Messrs. Curtis and Norton and when returned, had on it their names for a liberal sum, I think \$300 each, "Provided an equal sum be raised from the citizens of the town in two weeks." This

looked like business; the trustees and others interested woke up, the town was canvassed, the money raised in the specified time, and the academy building thoroughly repaired. Mr. Norton was chosen one of the trustees and plans were formed for raising a fund for the institution which should make it self-supporting for three terms in the year. Circulars were sent to sons and daughters of Ashfield, and other means adopted for raising funds. Among these were the Ashfield Academy dinners. As these became somewhat noted, we quote from the Greenfield *Centennial Gazette* and Boston papers a list of the speakers at those dinners so far as they are there given.

September, 11, 1879—Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard, Rev. Lewis Green, Josephus Crafts, W. W. Mitchell, Col. Hart Leavitt, Dr. Josiah Trow, Prof. W. F. Sherwin, George William Curtis. August, 1880—Prof. Norton, Rev. Arthur Shirley, Joseph Griswold, William Dean Howells, Rev. J. F. Moors, Col. Leavitt, Rev. J. B. Harrison, Prof. Fisk of "Sanderson," M. G. Clark, the Orientalist, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, G. W. Curtis. August 25, 1881—Prof. Norton, Charles Dudley Warner, Prof. G. Stanley Hall, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Rev. J. F. Moors, Fred'k G. Howes, Rev. Mr. Matthews, Hon. George Sheldon, Judge C. C. Conant, G. W. Curtis. August 24, 1882—Prof. Norton, Josephus Crafts, Rev. Lewis Greene, Prof. G. Stanley Hall, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, V. M. Porter, in the Legislature of that year, G. W. Curtis. August 29, 1883—In the absence of Prof. Norton, Mr. Curtis presided. William Whiting, M. C., Prof. Perry, Rev. J. F. Moors, Prof. Hall, S. T. Field, Esq., Major Henry Winn, Rev. J. W. Chadwick. August 22, 1884—Prof. Norton, Prof. Fisk, Prof. Hall, Rev. Ames, then of Philadelphia, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, William Hall, G. W. Curtis. August 27, 1885—Prof. Norton, Prof. Hall, C. P. Cranch, J. B. Harrison, James Russell Lowell, G. W. Curtis. August 26, 1886—Prof. Norton, Prof. Hall, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, W. D. Howells, G. W. Cable, Fred Howes, G. W. Curtis. August 25, 1887—Prof. Norton, President Hall, Charles Dudley Warner, Hon. Geo. Sheldon, G. W. Curtis. August 23, 1888—Prof. Norton, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, J. B. Harrison, President Seelye of Smith College, Geo. W. Cable, G. W. Curtis. August 22, 1889—Prof. Norton, Prof. Hall, Prof. F. A. Tupper, Rev. C. B. F. Pease, Joseph H. Choate, G. W. Curtis. August 28, 1890—Prof. Norton, Chauncey Boice, Solomon Field, Timothy



G. Spaulding, Rev. P. V. Finch, Prof. Hall, Schoolmaster Mitchell of Cummington, Charles Goodwin, G. W. Curtis. August 27, 1891—Prof. Norton, President Hall, Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Edward Atkinson, Rev. Robert Collyer, Hon. Edward J. Phelps, G. W. Curtis. 1892—Mr. Curtis having died, there was no dinner. 1893—Prof. Norton, Hon. Wayne McVeagh and Stanley Hall were the principal speakers, and touching words of eulogy of Curtis were spoken by all. 1894—Charles Dudley Warner, John W. Chadwick, Archibald Howe, Rev. C. B. F. Pease. 1895—Prof. Norton, Ex.-Gov. William E. Russell, Prof. A. H. Tolman. 1896—Prof. Norton, Hon. Wm. H. Rice of Albany, Miss Lizzie M. Curtis, Prof. Thomas of Lake Forest University, Illinois, Rev. Mr. Chadwick and Rev. Mr. Pease. 1897—Prof. Norton, President Mendenhall of the Worcester Tech., Frank McVeagh and the Rev. Dr. Randtaler of Chicago. 1898—Prof. Norton, Dr. Philip S. Moxom of Springfield, Booker T. Washington, Hon. Sherman E. Rogers of Buffalo. 1899—Prof. Norton, Sen. H. C. Parsons of Greenfield, Rev. Dr. A. H. Plumb, Charles Dudley Warner, Miss Lizzie Curtis and Dr. Chadwick. 1900—Prof. Norton, Prof. Josiah Royce of Harvard, Richard Henry Dana, Dr. G. Stanley Hall. 1901—Prof. Norton, Ex.-Gov. D. H. Chamberlain, Hon. Charles S. Hamlin of Boston. 1902—Prof. Norton, E. Burritt Smith of Chicago, Louis E. Erich of Colorado Springs. 1903—the 25th and last—Prof. Norton, Dr. G. Stanley Hall as "Sanderson Academy's sample scholar," Frederick G. Howes for the Trustees, President Pritchett of the Mass. Institute Tech., Mrs. Booker T. Washington, Sir Frederick Pollock, and Prof. Norton's Valedictory.

Professor Norton was aware of failing health and vigor and at the close of a quarter of a century of the dinners he decided it best to cease his connection with them. General regret was expressed at their cessation and some pressure was made to have them continued, but the trustees felt that without Mr. Norton at the head, it would be very difficult to sustain their reputation. There were some people from out of town who attended most of the dinners during the twenty-five years. There were those who criticised some of the views expressed by Mr. Norton very severely, but none doubted his sincerity or could but respect the fearlessness with which they were spoken. Time and a broader charity will probably show that he was



nearer right than his criticisers. The people of the town grew to feel a pride in the reputation of the dinners and when the town was annually canvassed for supplies, gave freely what was asked, then many of them went to the dinner and paid a dollar a plate for the privilege. Some one lady usually had the general charge of the dinner, selecting her assistants and the waiters. Among those having charge and giving efficient service were: Mrs. Benjamin Carter, Mrs. Joshua Hall, Mrs. Almon Bronson, Mrs. Alvan Hall and Mrs. W. E. Ford. The trustees who were active with Professor Norton in making the general arrangements for the dinners were Rev. Lewis Greene, Esquire Ranney, A. D. Flower, Alvan Hall and Charles A. Hall. The total net receipts from the twenty-five dinners and the triennial fairs held were about \$7,400.

When Mr. Sanderson first located the Academy here, there were only two dwellings on that side of the street west of the corner, so that the students had sufficient playground without disturbing the citizens. But in time, as the population of the village increased, houses were built near the lot, and there was trouble between the occupants and the pupils, so that at times the selectmen were called upon to prohibit ball playing and other games in the street fronting the Academy. In 1885, Mr. John W. Field of Philadelphia, who had also made Ashfield his summer home, hearing of the trouble with the boys, investigated the matter and finally bought a lot of three and one-half acres near the village, which he presented to the Academy as a playground for the pupils. The lot was named by the trustees the "Field of Ashfield," in honor of its giver. In the winter of 1887, Mr. Field died. His remains were brought here for burial, as he had expressed a desire to be buried in the cemetery near his summer home, in the town which he had come to respect and to love. July 27, of the same year, the trustees received a letter from Mrs. Eliza W. Field, the wife of Mr. Field, in which she said:

Desirous that there should be in Ashfield a permanent memorial of my dear husband, of such character as to promote the best interests of the community, and to connect his name

with its permanent life, I propose to present you in trust, the sum of seventy-five hundred dollars, for the following objects: I wish with this sum a memorial building, to be called the 'Field Memorial Hall' of the Sanderson Academy, should be erected under your charge, suitably designed and arranged to afford proper accommodations to the Academy for the library, for the existing museum and such other collections as may be added to it, and for such other cognate objects as it may seem wise for you to provide for. I trust that arrangements may be made by which the Library shall be free to all who may wish to make use of it, and shall be open whenever in your judgment it can be of service. My husband had very much at heart Free Libraries. I purpose at some future time to add to the Library the bulk of the collection of books belonging to my husband and myself, a large collection of photographs, many interesting oil paintings and our collection of bronzes.

The trustees took action in the matter at once, and after thorough consideration as to the site of the new building, decided to locate it upon the three acre lot which had already been given by Mr. Field. The new location would not perhaps be as convenient, but would have the advantage of ample and pleasant playgrounds for the pupils, at such a distance from the street and dwellings as would not be a disturbance to the citizens. The building was designed by Howard Walker, a Boston architect, and the plan approved by the trustees. On advertising for bids, it was found that no contractor was willing to complete the building for the sum given. It was then proposed to leave out the gymnasium building and shed, but Mrs. Field was unwilling that this should be done, and advanced \$1,500 more, making \$9,000 in all for the buildings. The contract was then awarded to Mr. H. Worden of Hoosac Falls, the lowest bidder, and satisfactorily completed by him in the fall of 1888. Mrs. Field gave other sums towards enlarging the grounds, furnishing the building, etc., which raised the total amount to more than \$10,000.

The building was formally dedicated July 24, 1889. A. D. Flower, Esq., presided on the occasion, Frederick G. Howes read an historical sketch of the Academy and Mr. Curtis gave an address.

In September of that year the school was opened in the new building.

Mrs. Field was not satisfied to have the institution remain as an Academy, partly supported by tuition paid by the pupils. She desired to make it free to all the children of the town of a suitable grade. In order to do this she proposed to pay over to the Academy annually for two years the sum of \$500 provided the town would raise a like sum and make the school free, afterwards she would place on trust a sum, the income of which would equal that amount. Besides the sums received from the fairs and dinners, there came frequent gifts from the Norton and Curtis families, from "Friends," from Mrs. Field and from natives and citizens of the town. Mrs. Field deeded her Cross Hill Cottage place to the trustees which was afterwards sold to Mr. Farragut and Mrs. Curtis for \$7,500.

In 1903, Alvan Sanderson, a nephew of Rev. Alvan Sanderson, the founder, died and left the Academy by will about \$5,000. It was the earnest wish and effort of Mr. Norton to add every cent that could be spared above the annual expenses, to the permanent fund. This fund now amounts to about \$23,000, and is cared for by the "Trustees of the Sanderson Academy School Fund," consisting at present of Messrs. Church, Boice and Urquhart.

Since the opening of the school in 1879 for three terms in a year, in the old Academy, the teachers were as follows: C. A. Fisk, 1879-84; Wm. S. Cooper, 1884-85; Stephen Ryder, Carl M. Scott, Charles H. Clark, 1885-86; Phebe P. Hall, 1886-88; Bertha Chase, 1888-89; Martha E. Hersey, 1889-96; Orren Henry Smith, 1896-1900; F. C. Hosmer, 1900-02; Morton A. Sturtevant, 1902-05; Walter H. Fletcher, 1905-06; Burton W. Sanderson, 1906-07; Nahum Leonard, 1907-10. The assistants were Carrie I. Doane, 1889-92; Lucy E. Keith, 1892-93; Louise Dickinson, 1893-94; Nancy K. Hubbard, 1895-96; Nellie A. Smith, 1896-97; Amelia S. Ford, 1897-1911; Julia A. Kelley, 1904-05; Amelia C. Boytano, 1907-09; Bertha Nead, 1907-08; Faye C. Dame, 1908-09; Olive H. Hubbard, 1909-10.

We have no accurate record of the number of pupils previous to 1889. Since that time the yearly attendance has been as follows:

Year	No. Pupils	No. Grads.	Year	No. Pupils	No. Grads.
1889	48	0	1900	38	6
1890	48	0	1901	31	7
1891	40	3	1902	30	3
1892	40	11	1903	32	0
1893	37	8	1904	35	14
1894	37	3	1905	30	7
1895	37	16	1906	27	1
1896	39	6	1907	54	7
1897	40	9	1908	55	5
1898	41	6	1909	58	7
1899	30	5	1910	69	5
			1911	76	16

Mr. C. L. Judkins, the newly elected superintendent, in the winter of 1907, after thoroughly satisfying himself of the worth and advantages of the Academy and High School in this town, took pains to acquaint the surrounding towns with these advantages, resulting in an increased attendance, as the list shows. Two years later he became satisfied that if the capacity of the building could be increased and certain improvements made, the number of pupils could be increased to eighty or a hundred. To obtain funds to do this he opened correspondence with all who were supposed to be interested in the Academy, with the result that nearly \$6,000 was raised. Mr. M. M. Belding gave \$2,000, the town voted \$1,000, the trustees, \$500, and about \$2,500 was raised by Mr. Judkins in contributions from outside parties, ranging from \$25 to \$200.

The library was moved to the lower room of the town hall, so that the whole building could be utilized for the school, giving in the upper story an assembly room capable of seating eighty-five pupils, and a physical laboratory, while in the lower part are two recitation rooms and a chemical laboratory. Modern plumbing and steam heat were put in the building.

With all these changes, it ought not to be forgotten that the Fields were the greatest pecuniary benefactors of the Academy,

having given in all over \$20,000, and that the Academy was erected by Mrs. Field as a memorial building to her husband. The grounds should still bear the name of the "FIELD OF SANDERSON ACADEMY" and the upper assembly room should not lose the name of "FIELD MEMORIAL HALL OF SANDERSON ACADEMY."

The trustees who labored for years so faithfully in the interest of the Academy and who have now passed away must not be forgotten. Moses Cook, Rev. Lewis Greene, Chauncey Boice, Charles F. Goodwin, Alvan Hall, Charles Howes, and Henry S. Ranney were earnest workers in this institution. After the death of Mr. Ranney in 1899, the following testimonial was presented and read by Professor Norton at a meeting of the Directors and placed upon the records of the Board.

In the death of the late Henry S. Ranney, Sanderson Academy has suffered as grave a personal loss as could befall it. For more than forty-five years a member of this Board, and for twenty-two years its President, Mr. Ranney gave to the Academy the full benefit of those qualities of mind and character which made him one of the most useful and respected citizens of Ashfield. His sound judgment, his liberal disposition, his intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the town all combined to make his services to the Academy of special value, while his genial and kindly spirit, his ready friendliness and his even temper won for him the warm and affectionate regard and respect of his associates.

Desirous that an expression of their sense of his worth and of their own loss should appear upon their Records, the Trustees of Sanderson Academy adopt the foregoing words in place of any formal resolution, and desire the Secretary to enter them upon the Records.

#### LIBRARIES IN ASHFIELD

In 1815, an association called the Second Social Library was formed in town. Tradition says, and the name would imply that a library existed prior to this, but there are no records and no definite information regarding it, although there is some evidence it was in South Ashfield. The first meeting of the Second Social Library was called for by a petition signed by fourteen



persons. The preamble to the constitution reads as follows:

Being governed by motives of social as well as of private interest, and being sensible that no body of men whatever can unite together in a compact like this without certain rules and regulations whereby they are to be directed and governed, therefore, We, etc.

The first officers chosen were Ephraim Williams, moderator; William Bassett, clerk; Jonathan Lilly, Jr., collector; Capt. Roswell Ranney, treasurer; James McFarland, librarian, the books to be kept at his house. (Mr. McFarland lived where Otto Jacobson does.) Meetings of the members were to be held quarterly, when all the books were to be brought in and others drawn. The books were to be looked over, fines imposed and paid. Books could be drawn between the meetings at any time after returning the books drawn. At first, only one book could be drawn on a share, later, three. None of the officers received any salary. Even the librarian furnished rent, heat, light and services free until 1843, when the librarian was voted \$2.00 a year for "taking care of the library." Of course, in the early years the number of books was small and could be easily moved, and the library migrated from one house to another as one after another of the prominent citizens would consent to have the care of it. After three years' sojourn with Captain McFarland, the other librarians that followed were Horatio Bartlett, William Williams, John C. Baldwin, Dr. Atherton Clark, Dr. Jared Bement, Alvan Perry, Capt. Joseph Upton. From 1839 to 1843, L. C. Sanderson; 1843 to 1847, H. S. Ranney; 1847, back to L. C. Sanderson, where the library was kept in his shop for fourteen years with Mr. Sanderson for librarian.

The price of shares at the beginning was \$3.00, and the annual tax, 50 cts.

Besides the librarians mentioned, some of the other principal supporters of the library were Capt. William Bassett, Jonathan Lilly, Jr., Capt. Roswell Ranney, Col. Nehemiah Hathaway, Joseph Griswold, Capt. Thomas W. White, Rev. Dr. Thomas Shepard, George Bassett, Daniel Howes, Marcus T. Parker, Wait Bement, Esq., Thomas C. Sears.



The library seems to have been well conducted on business principles, and the by-laws were strictly enforced. The returned books were carefully examined, the fines rigidly and impartially imposed, and cheerfully and promptly paid by the patrons, who realized that the money would go for the good of the library to which they were always loyal. As specimens, we note a few of the fines recorded, which were evidently in the times of tallow candles.

Dr. Atherton Clark Greas . . . . .	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ cts.
Charles Adams turning down a leaf . . . . .	3 cts.
Capt. Bethuel Lilly damage . . . . .	9 cts.
Abner Rogers dirt, grease and tearing . . . . .	39 cts.
Elijah Paine Esq., dirt . . . . .	3 cts.
Capt. Justus Smith not returning . . . . .	50 cts.
Capt. William Bassett dirt . . . . .	8 cts.
Daniel Forbes turning down two leaves . . . . .	6 cts.
Abel Williams dirt in Cook's Voyages . . . . .	10 cts.
Austin Lilly dirt in Boswell's Life of Johnson . . . . .	3 cts.
Eli Eldredge Jr., dirt in Life of Washington . . . . .	12 cts.

The fines were carefully and conscientiously graded from 3 to 50 cents.

Among the first hundred books bought were Hume's History of England, Bancroft's Life of Washington, Rollins' Ancient History, 8 Vols., Cowper's Poems, Irving's Works as published, Scott's Works, 6 Vols., Vattel's Law of Nations, Life of Franklin. Later, Dickens' Works as fast as published, were purchased, and care was taken to furnish only the better class of books. The library was well patronized and had a strong educational influence. The Librarian's book, where the books were charged to different individuals, shows that a good class of reading was selected. Not a few men and women acquired a good general knowledge of history and English literature as well as of other subjects. Joseph Hall, uncle of Charles A. Hall, Principal of the Hartford High School for twenty-five years, also Principal emeritus until his death, once said, "That old library kept down in Sanderson's shoe shop did more for me than the Academy ever did." It is indeed a serious question

whether the little library of five hundred well selected volumes was not of more real value than our library of six thousand volumes, with the disposition and fierce demand for only the light and fleeting fiction of the day as reading.

After the election of R. H. Ranney as librarian and the removal of the books as before noted, the next entry is by Mr. H. S. Ranney, his son having enlisted and gone to war. It is as follows: "The time for the annual meeting, Sept. 2nd, 1862, passed without the meeting being held. (Note.—The lack of interest in the meeting may be attributed to the great attention to the war forced upon us by the slave holding Rebels.)" During the war the meetings were kept up with only a small attendance and little interest until November 28, 1866. Mr. Ranney as secretary has this entry:

The members, or owners of this Library purchased books and kept the business along until Nov. 28, 1866, when a meeting was held by common consent, and it was then Voted: to dispose of the books and property of this Library. The books were divided into ten piles—and then the choice in the piles of books—or bunches of books—was set up to the highest bidder, until all the lots were thus distributed among the owners. The whole number of books thus disposed of was over 450—and the number of owners of shares was ten. The fact of there having been a new Library just established in this town, called "The Ashfield Library Association" rendered it unnecessary and undesirable to continue this organization longer in existence, therefore Voted: That this Library Association which has had an honorable and useful existence for over half a century, be now dissolved. This vote was passed unanimously.

A true record of said meeting,

Attest

H. S. Ranney, Secretary.

Our new summer residents, Charles Eliot Norton and George William Curtis, had noted the decline of the old library, and November 9, 1866, partly through their influence a meeting was held which resulted in the formation of a new organization called the Ashfield Library Association. Rev. Lewis Greene was elected president, Rev. E. C. Ewing, secretary. Most of

the members of the old library turned in their books, Messrs. Curtis and Norton gave quite a quantity of books and each gave a lecture for the benefit of the library, the proceeds amounting to \$132. The shares were placed at \$5 each, with an annual tax of \$1. In less than six months, sixty shares were sold and the library placed on an excellent footing. A pleasant room was hired over Mr. Almon Bronson's store, (now Mr. Henry's) and Miss Miranda Smith appointed librarian at a salary of \$25 a year. The library became a popular institution. Mr. Addison Graves by bequest in his will gave \$100, Mr. George C. Goodwin \$50, for its support, and Mr. Alonzo Lilly \$50 for the purpose of buying shares for those having large families who did not already have the privilege of the library, these families to be selected by Mr. George Bassett. In 1882, Mr. Lilly placed in the hands of three trustees, Mr. Charles Howes, Mr. Chauncey Boice, and Mr. Charles Lilly, the sum of \$1,500, the annual income of which was to be used for the benefit of the library. In a letter to the trustees regarding the fund he says:

Feeling an interest in the disposition you may make of this money, I have been looking around for securities, but find none I like as well as the credit of the town of Ashfield. As the interest arising from this money to the town is returned to it again, or rather to its own Library, (in which every man, woman and child in Ashfield is so largely interested,) I will not doubt that the town will consent to receive this money as a loan, for an indefinite time, and to pay a just and generous rate of interest semi-annually for its use. The aid this interest will give, together with the larger aid that the inhabitants of the town can give by becoming subscribers to it, will give a prosperity and perpetuity to the library, in which the town may justly take great pride.

In view of the fact that by the payment of a very small sum of money, every inhabitant of the town can become a stockholder, entitling him to the reading of fifty or more volumes each year, (a library of itself), I cannot doubt that every inhabitant will feel it his duty and pleasure to become a patron. No town can afford to be without a library, and it should be a good one.

Truly yours,

Alonzo Lilly.

The town accepted the loan and for several years paid 6% per annum for the use of the money, thus giving \$90 for the benefit of the library. In 1887, through an unwise policy, under the plea of economy, the rate was reduced to 4%, thus giving the library only \$60. In 1881, there being a convenient room in the second story of the old Academy, it was proposed to remove the library to that place. There was some opposition, but it was carried by a vote of 26 to 11. At an adjourned meeting two weeks later, a vote to reconsider was lost by a vote (in person and by proxy) of 65 to 17, and the library was moved.

In 1887, the following letter was received from Mrs. John W. Field:

Cross Hill Cottage, July 27, 1887.

Mr. F. G. Howes,

Sec. and Treas. of the Library Association of Ashfield.

My Dear Sir:—

As Mr. Wadhams, President of the Library Association, is not in town, I address myself to the Association through you. In offering to the trustees of Sanderson Academy a sum of money, \$7,500, to be expended for educational purposes to the advantage of our town of Ashfield and its vicinity, I had also a purpose expressed in full in my letter to them regarding the Library which I now state to you in greater detail.

I wish to provide a spacious room for your Library, where I now desire to place a large portrait of my husband of very great merit as a work of art, and in the winter to place there a large number of water colors, oil paintings, photographs, reclaiming them for the cottage in the summer time, and these will at my death belong to the Library Association, together with a large number of valuable and interesting books and some bronzes of beauty and interest, on the condition that the Library be constituted a free Library for the people of Ashfield.

My husband, to honor whose memory is my purpose in this proposal, was very much interested that libraries should be free.

The sympathy which has been shown me here leads me to hope that you will understand the force of my desire in making the above condition, and that you will gratify me by arranging to comply therewith.

Yours Respectfully and Truly,  
Eliza W. Field.

At a special meeting of the Association held August 5, 1887, it was Voted: "That we tender to Mrs. Eliza W. Field our sincere thanks for the proposition contained in her letter to this Association, and that we appreciate not only her kindness to this institution, but also her generosity in wishing to make it free to all the inhabitants of the town. Voted: That it is the expression of this meeting that the Association should accept the proposition of Mrs. Field, with the condition that if at any future time there seems to be no adequate income for the proper support of the library, a sufficient sum may be charged for the use of books to prevent the decline of the library, and that the sum paid for the use of books be still continued until an equivalent sum from some other source takes its place. Voted: That Mrs. Field's letter be entered on the records of the Association, in connection with this vote."

At the annual meeting, October 5, of the same year, it was Voted: "That in order to further the carrying out of Mrs. Field's proposition, we hereby offer to rent the library to the town for the free use of all its inhabitants under the by-laws and regulations of the Association, for the sum of One hundred and fifty dollars per annum."

At a special meeting called June 7, 1889, the following letter was read:

To the Directors of the Ashfield Library Association.

Gentlemen:—In a letter bearing date of July 19, 1887, Mrs. John W. Field presented the Trustees of Sanderson Academy a certain sum of money for the purpose of building a new Academy, with instructions to furnish a room in said Academy building suitable for the use of the Library Association for the Library, provided the Library be made free to the citizens of the town. The building is now completed, and in it, on the second floor a room for your use free of charge on the above condition. Trusting it will meet with your approbation,

We are, very respectfully,  
Archibald D. Flower, for the Ex. Com.

It was then voted:

That we accept the above invitation and remove the library to the new Academy building, it being understood as a continuation and carrying out the vote of the Association taken

Aug. 5, 1887, in response to Mrs. Field's proposition recorded on page 22. Voted: that the time and manner of moving the books be left with the directors.

From the records of the annual meeting the same year we quote:

Whereas the Library Room provided by Mrs. J. W. Field in the new Field Memorial Building of the Sanderson Academy and High School of Ashfield has now been occupied and applied to its intended use, the Ashfield Library Association at its annual meeting on the 2nd of Oct., 1889, Resolved, that not only for themselves but in behalf of the town at large they request Mrs. Field to accept this expression of their gratitude to her for her devoted interest in all that concerns the welfare of the town, and especially for her generosity and wise forethought in providing and furnishing with all its various appliances so convenient, commodious, and beautiful a library room for the free use of all the people of Ashfield.

With the exception of two years when absent, Mr. Curtis gave an annual lecture for the benefit of the Library, in all, twenty-three lectures, the results from which amounted to about \$1,400. In the Secretary's book, under date of October 5, 1892, is the following entry:

We desire to place upon permanent record our recognition and grateful appreciation of the valuable services rendered this institution by the late George William Curtis. In connection with Prof. Norton he was instrumental in the formation of the library, and for twenty-five years he has been its constant benefactor and friend; not only helping us by his donations and eloquent annual lectures, but by the kindly interest he has shown in all plans for making the library a means of help and improvement to the people of Ashfield."

Professor Norton also gave valuable aid by donations of books and by lectures and readings.

President G. Stanley Hall has given nine lectures for the benefit of the Library.

Portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Field, busts of Professor Norton and Mr. Curtis, also a portrait of Mr. Alonzo Lilly have been placed in the library room.



In a letter acceding to the request of the directors for this portrait, written in the trembling hand of his ninetieth year, Mr. Lilly says, under date of November 13, 1889:

Your esteemed favor of 19th ult. at hand, requesting my portrait to be placed upon the walls of the Ashfield Library. I have always felt a deep interest in the welfare and prosperity of my native town, and since I left it in 1820 at the age of twenty years, I have never failed visiting it but four times, at least once each year. As nothing could afford me more pleasure or be of more value to my friends and neighbors of my native town than a good Library, I availed myself of the opportunity to give at different times small aid. I feel a delicacy in complying with your request as others have so generously for a like and valuable purpose given many times in excess of the small aid given by me; but as you have requested my portrait I cannot refuse, leaving it to you to do with it as you may see fit.

Permit me to say to the good people of Ashfield, give your children all the benefits the Library and Academy can afford (better to them than gold), and with some legitimate object in view, and willing hands to work, their prosperity and success in life are assured.

Respectfully yours,  
Alonzo Lilly.

Rev. Lewis Greene was president of the Board from 1867 to 1884, Rev. J. Wadhams for three years, Dr. G. R. Fessenden from 1888 to 1900, J. M. Sears to 1909. Wait Bement, Esq., was secretary and treasurer from 1867 to 1881, Moses Cook from 1881 to 1885, F. G. Howes from 1885 to 1909. Mrs. Eliza A. Coleman was librarian after Miss Smith, from 1867 to 1884, Miss Julia A. Williams from 1884 to 1907, Mrs. Maude Dodge to 1909.

Rev. Mr. Green took a great interest in, and exercised a fatherly care over the institution, putting in a good grade of books which gave character to the library. H. S. Ranney, Esq., A. W. Crafts and Asa Wait were warm friends of the Library, also Mrs. W. E. Ford, Geo. B. Church and others. For twelve years past the town has voted \$200 per annum for the free use of books. In 1903, branch libraries were located in Baptist Corner and South Ashfield, both of which have been well patronized. At present the Library contains about 6,000 volumes.



## CHAPTER XII

### TOWN OFFICERS, CIVIL MAGISTRATES

Names of men who have served as selectmen in Ashfield, with date of their terms of office.

Ebenezer Belding, 1762, '65, '68, '69; Chileab Smith, 1762, '66, '67; Phillip Phillips, 1762, '68, '88; Nathan Wait, 1763; Reuben Ellis, 1763, '64; Jonathan Edson, 1764; Nathan Chapin, 1764, '68; Samuel Belding, 1765, '70, '72, '73, '74; Jonathan Yeamans, 1765; Moses Fuller, 1766, '68; Thomas Phillips, 1766, '67; Timothy Lewis, 1767; Isaac Shepard, 1769, '70, '79; Samuel Allen, 1770, '73, '82; Jonathan Taylor, 1772, '74; Aaron Lyon, 1772, '75-'77, '80; Reuben Ellis, 1774; Jasher Taylor, 1775-'76, '79, '83; Elisha Cranson, 1775; Benjamin Phillips, 1776-'78, '80, '82; Peter Cross, 1777; Phineas Bartlett, 1777, '78; Jacob Sherwin, 1778, '82; John Bement, 1779, '93; Rowland Sears, 1780, '88-'92, '94, '95; Warren Green, Jr., 1781, '85; Uriah Goodwin, 1781; John Sherwin, 1781; Thomas Stocking, 1783, '84, '86, '87; Benjamin Rogers, 1783; Chileab Smith, Jr., 1784-'87, '89, '91, '92, 1800, '01; John Ellis, 1784, '90; Warren Green, Jr., 1785; Ephraim Williams, 1785, '88-'92, '94, '95, '98, '99; William Flower, 1786-'87; Warren Green, 1793; Lemuel Spurr, 1793; Abner Kelley, 1796-1808; Joshua Howes, 1796-'99; Abiezer Perkins, 1796; Elijah Paine, 1797; Samuel Guilford, 1800-'06; John Alden, 1806-'08; Thomas White, 1807-'15, 1825-'29; Bethuel Lilly, 1809-'11, 1816-'19; Josiah Drake, 1809-'11; Chipman Smith, 1812-'15; Nathaniel Holmes, 1812-'19, 1826-'27; Dimick Ellis, 1816-'19; Roswell Ranney, 1820-'21, '24; Jonathan Sears, 1820-'26, '29-'31; Samuel Eldredge, 1821-'25; Simeon Phillips, 1823; Sanford Boice, 1827, '28, '34, '39, '46, '47, '48; Austin Lilly, 1828, '29; Seth Church, 1830-'33; George Hall, 1830-'33; William Bassett, 1832, '33; Daniel Williams, 1834; Joseph Hall, 1834, '39; Chester Sanderson, 1835-'38, '40, '47; Anson Bement, 1835-'37, '40; Isaac Taylor, 1835-'37; Friend Knowlton, 1838, '39, '49, '50; David Gray, 1840, '41, '49, '50; Wait Bement, 1841, '42, '44, '70, '71; Salmon Miller, 1841; Hosea Blake, 1842-'44, '46, '47; Alvan Perry, 1842, '45, '51; John Guilford, 1843; Nathan Vincent, 1843; Lot Bassett, 1844, '45; Alvan Hall, 1845, '54, '65; Ephraim Williams, 1846; William Bassett, 1848; Henry Paine, 1849-'51,

'55, '56, '67; Nathan Knowlton, 1851-'53, '57, '58, '63, '66, '72, '73, '75, '76; Foster R. King, 1852; Kimball H. Howes, 1853; Orville Hall, 1853, '56-'58, '66, '72, '76, '77; Henry S. Ranney, 1854; Addison Graves, 1854-56; Silas Blake, 1855, '74, '75; Daniel Williams, Jr., 1857, '58; Frederick Forbes, 1859; Freeman Williams, 1859; Chauncey Boice, 1859, '60, '79, '80; Nelson Gardner, 1860; Josephus Crafts, 1860-'63; Almon Howes, 1861, '63, '64, '67, '68, '78; Lorenzo Wait, 1861; Moses Cook, 1862, '68; Darius Williams, 1862; Josiah Cross, 1864-'65; Frederick G. Howes, 1865, '66, '74; Addison G. Hall, 1867-73; Joseph Blake, 1869-'71; Albert W. Crafts, 1869; Charles Howes, 1873, '75, '79, '80, '82, '84, '86-'93, '95, '96; Cyrus A. Hall, 1874; Alvan Hall, 2d, 1876-'78, '80, '87, '88, 1895-'99; Lavant F. Gray, 1877-'79, '85, '86; William H. Pease, 1881; Levi Gardner, 1882, '83; A. D. Flower, 1884, '85, '95; Emory D. Church, 1881-'85, 1899-1903; George B. Church, 1886-'94, '96-'98, 1908; Walter Guilford, 1889-'94; Sanford H. Boice, 1894; Charles A. Hall, 1897; Allison G. Howes, 1898-1909; Frederick H. Smith, 1899-1907; Harlan P. Howes, 1904-'09; Claude D. Church, 1909.

The following persons were elected town clerks, on the date indicated, and served until the next following date:

1762, Samuel Belding; 1766, Benjamin Phillips; 1776, Dr. Phineas Bartlett; 1778, Jacob Sherwin; 1782, Dr. Phineas Bartlett; 1794, Dr. Francis Mantor; 1795, Dr. Phineas Bartlett; 1799, Levi Cook; 1802, Elijah Paine; 1806, Selah Norton; 1807, Henry Bassett; 1813, Lewis Williams; 1814, Dr. Enos Smith; 1816, Henry Bassett; 1823, Dimick Ellis; 1826, James McFarland; 1830, Russell Bement; 1832, Wait Bement; 1836, Samuel Barber; 1839, Henry S. Ranney; 1847, Nelson Gardner; 1852, Dr. Sidney Brooks; 1853, Henry S. Ranney; 1870, Moses G. Cook; 1873, Henry S. Ranney; 1898, John M. Sears.

The following list gives the number of years that each person named has served as town treasurer of Ashfield, since the year 1762:

Dr. Phineas Bartlett, 22; Hon. Elijah Paine, 19; Nelson Gardner, Esq., 18; John M. Sears, Esq., 16; Samuel Hall, Esq., 11; Asa C. Wait, 10; Almon E. Bronson, 8; Chester Sanderson, Esq., 6; Henry Bassett, Esq., 5; Ephraim Williams, Esq., 3; Capt. Benjamin Phillips, 3; Levi Cook, Esq., 3; Dea. Alvan Perry, 3; Warren Green Jr., 2; Dea. David Alden, 2; Charles

Williams, 2; Thomas Phillips, 1; Timothy Lewis, 1; Ebenezer Belding, 1; John Sadler, 1; Rev. Silas Blaisdell, 1; John Hart, 1; George G. Hall, 1; Moses Cook, 1; Charles H. Wilcox, 1.

Representatives to the General Court were elected as follows:

1775, Capt. Elisha Cranson; 1779, Dea. Jonathan Taylor; 1780, Jacob Sherwin, Esq.; 1782, Benjamin Rogers; 1783-'86, Capt. Elisha Cranson; 1787, Chileab Smith, Jr.; 1789, Capt. Phillip Phillips; 1790, Ephraim Williams, Esq. (who served eleven years); 1804, Elijah Paine, Esq.; 1806-'07, Ephraim Williams; 1808, Ephraim Williams and Elijah Paine; 1809, Ephraim Williams and Thomas White, Esq.; 1810, Ephraim Williams and Henry Bassett; 1811-'12, Thomas White and Henry Bassett; 1814, Dr. Enos Smith; 1816, Dr. Enos Smith and Henry Bassett; 1817, Dr. Enos Smith; 1820, Henry Bassett; 1823, Dimick Ellis; 1827, Henry Bassett; 1829, Dr. Enos Smith and Capt. Roswell Ranney; 1830, Dr. Enos Smith and Dea. Samuel Bement; 1831 (May), Capt. Roswell Ranney and Henry Bassett; 1831 (Nov.), Henry Bassett, Esq., and Chester Sanderson, Esq.; 1832, Chester Sanderson and Jonathan Sears; 1833, Seth Church and Anson Bement; 1834, Justus Smith and Judah Taylor; 1835, Jonathan Sears and Wait Bement, Esq.; 1836, Anson Bement and Wait Bement, Esq.; 1837, Roswell Ranney; 1838, William Bassett and Friend Knowlton; 1839, Friend Knowlton; 1840, Sanford Boice; 1844, Jasper Bement; 1847, Samuel W. Hall, Esq.; 1848, Samuel Barber; 1849-'50, Hosea Blake; 1851, Henry S. Ranney, Esq.; 1852, Anson Bement; 1853, Nelson Gardner, Esq.; 1855, Manly Guilford; 1856, Phillip Bassett; 1858, Nathan Knowlton; 1860, Dea. Joseph Vincent, Jr.; 1863, Chauncey Boice; 1865, David S. Howes; 1867, Henry S. Ranney; 1870, Levi Gardner; 1874, Frederick G. Howes; 1877, Nelson Gardner; 1883, Dea. Frederick H. Smith; 1888, Charles Howes; 1899, Dr. George R. Fessenden.

Elijah Paine, Esq., and Dr. Enos Smith each served one or two years as senator.

The pay of the lawmakers was small and usually fixed by the legislature of that year. The pay for the year 1812 was \$2 per day—in session about sixty days. In 1814 they were to forfeit five shillings for each day's absence without excuse. The fare from Boston to Ashfield and return was about \$8 and there were no free passes. Judah Taylor, who was sent in 1835, did

not come home during the entire session, which was for ninety-two days for that year. Small as was the compensation there were even then men who were willing to sacrifice themselves. It is not on record, but there is a well authenticated tradition that one year a prominent man of the town in open meeting made an offer of \$30 to the town treasury if they would send him to the General Court, and he was sent.

Another story not on record, comes down to us. Squire Phillips was sent one year and the town at the meeting seemed favorably disposed to send him another, when "Uncle Zeke Taylor," who was not quite friendly to the Squire, said he had always noticed that representatives the first year served the state, the second year they served themselves and the third year they served the devil; but Squire Phillips had been smarter than the rest and had served all three in one year and he thought they had better send another man. It seems that the argument was convincing, for another man was sent.

In the election of these representatives, there were in the main the two parties, Whig and Democrat, but the results show that even in those days there were independents, who dared to strike out and vote for the man in the other party, if they deemed him the better. The Whigs seemed to have been in the ascendancy, but there were occasional Democrats sandwiched in. In 1838, Edward Everett, the Whig candidate for governor had 200 votes, and Marcus Morton, Democrat, 113 votes. The Whig candidates for representative, Messrs. Bassett and Knowlton, had 170 votes and Chester Sanderson and Anson Bement, Democrats, had 130. In a number of cases, after balloting several times there would be no choice, and the town would vote not to send, or, if the vote was close, another meeting would be called. In 1836, two brothers, a Whig and a Democrat, were both chosen to represent the town in the legislature the same year. In 1847, the two physicians in the town were set up as opposing candidates, Dr. Sidney Brooks receiving 113, and Dr. Charles L. Knowlton 96, with many scattering votes. At another meeting called two weeks later, the voters decided that the doctors were needed at home; they were dropped as candidates and Samuel W. Hall elected.



About the beginning of the forties, the Liberty or Abolition party made its appearance in the shape of perhaps half a dozen voters, of whom Jasper Bement, Henry S. Ranney and Dea. Samuel Bement were most prominent. As this small beginning was the nucleus of the Free Soil party, which was in turn the nucleus of the Republican party in Ashfield, as well as in the nation, a little account of its growth may be interesting.

There are those living who can remember with what indifference if not derision, this little company was looked upon by the two parties of the day. But the new party gained steadily and in 1843, the representative vote stood: S. W. Hall (Whig), 131; Anson Bement (Dem.), 96; Jasper Bement (Liberty), 53. The next year Jasper Bement was elected. In '45, '46, there was no choice; in '47, '48, after close contests, Whigs were elected. In '49, the Liberty party, by accretions from the old parties, having grown into the Free Soil party, Hosea Blake was nominated by that party. There was a hot fight, but after two meetings Mr. Blake was declared elected by one vote.

There was much rejoicing by the Free Soil party and it was proposed to bring out the "Old Swivel" and celebrate the victory, but a company of the two opposing parties gathered to prevent it. It was finally fired once through the window of Mr. Crafts' grocery, it being thought prudent not to risk it on the street. After dark, an outside farmer backed up to the grocery, ostensibly for a "barrel of flour." The cannon was placed in a barrel and loaded in. The farmer drove away and when at Bassett's four corners he was joined by a few of the faithful, the cannon taken out and a rousing salute fired. The pursuers being soon on the track, the gun was taken to Mr. Seth Hall's house. The enemy appearing in considerable force and there being some danger of capture, Mr. Josephus Crafts took the gun down through a scuttle in the back part of the house and with the help of a few other men were on their way up to the pasture while the crowd were entering the house from the front. The gun was soon heard from in the pasture and the pursuers gave chase, only to hear the report in another direction. By midnight the gun was secreted and pursued and pursuers returned to the village.

To show the state of feeling not only in the town but in the county we give the following from the *Greenfield Gazette* the next week after this election.

In Ashfield, Hosea Blake, free soil coalition, was elected by one vote under the following circumstances. After the polls were opened two men whose names were not on the tax list, one of them a black man, were dragged into the hall by the free soil party, a tax assessed against them, their names put on the voting list and their votes deposited for Hosea Blake, the coalition candidate.

We hope the Whigs of Ashfield will not be browbeaten in this manner.

A petition signed by Capt. Kimball Howes and 77 others, remonstrating against the election of Mr. Blake, was sent to the Legislature and referred to the committee on elections. One of their number was sent to Ashfield to hear and report the evidence in the case.

The hearing was held in Cross' Hall, a large number of citizens being present. The evidence was taken to Boston and considered by the committee who finally reported against Mr. Blake retaining his seat. The matter was debated several days before the Legislature, Whiting Griswold of Greenfield and Nathaniel P. Banks of Waltham in favor of Mr. Blake and E. Rockwood Hoar of Concord and others against him. It was finally decided by a vote of 123 to 81 to allow Mr. Blake to retain his seat.

The next year, after two meetings and a close vote, Mr. Blake was reelected, and was one of the men who voted for Charles Sumner as United States Senator, who it will be remembered was, after a struggle, elected by one vote.

The advent of the American or "Know Nothing" order in the country was in 1853-4. Its object was to check and limit the power of the foreign and Roman Catholic element. A lodge was formed in this town in the season of 1854. It was a secret order, having its signs and pass words. The meetings were first held in the hall in Cross' hotel, later in the hall over a store which is now Rice's meat market. The name of the order,

known only to the initiated, was the American; the term "Know Nothing" was not acknowledged by the members, so if they were asked if they belonged to the Know Nothing party, they replied in the negative, and if a man who did not belong to the order was asked the same question he would of course give the same answer. There was therefore a great deal of mystery as to who really did belong to the order, so much so that before election time sentinels were posted near the piazza of the store to try and count the number entering the lodge. The estimate of the outsiders was very much underrated, for at the election the party carried the town, as it did the state, Henry J. Gardner receiving 121 votes; Emory Washburn, Whig, 93; Henry Wilson, Free Soil, 21; Henry W. Bishop, Democrat, 8. Dr. Charles L. Knowlton was the candidate for Representative but failed of election by one vote, he receiving 117 votes, all others 117. The Know Nothing party in the town soon disappeared, and Republican and Democrat only have existed since.

#### THE TOWN MAGISTRATES

One hundred years ago the office of Justice of the Peace was a very important one. He solemnized marriages, issued writs, tried both civil and criminal cases, and was both judge and jury in his decisions. Samuel Belding and Jacob Sherwin were the first recorded justices, Mr. Belding holding his commission from the King.

Capt. Phillip Phillips was one of the earliest state magistrates. His father, Thomas, was the second settler in the town, and came here when Phillip was about six years old. Phillip commenced life by building his house on the west side of Bellows Hill, where the old cellar hole may still be seen from the highway just over in Mr. Levant Gray's pasture. He afterwards built a large two-story house on the corner opposite where Mr. Gray now lives. He was a great hunter in his younger days, and killed twenty-nine bears in one season. He had thirteen children, two daughters and eleven sons, each son said to have been over six feet in height, all of whom were in Captain Phillips'

company. He held a commission from the King and when the Revolutionary war broke out deemed it his duty to remain loyal to his oath and his Sovereign, therefore was classed as one of the Tories and forced to pay heavy fines. Notwithstanding this, after the war he was chosen Representative to the General Court and was Justice of the Peace for many years. An old record book of the trials before him from May, 1790, to September, 1792, shows over three hundred cases tried before him in that time, most of them at his dwelling house. Many cases were for debt, and often "Defendant did not Appear tho Soll-emnny Called and was default." Everything was recorded in due legal form, but the spelling is somewhat original. A number of "A salt and Batery" cases are mentioned and some boys were tried for stealing "Watermillions" and fined 5s. Simeon Crittenden and Benjamin Spinning were before the Court on complaint of Nathaniel Sherwin, tithing-man, for "Disorderly Behavior on the Lords Day in the House of Public Worship" and fined 5s. each, with costs of 1s. There are a number of cases of fines imposed for neglect to appear at trainings when notified, also fines for profane swearing. An old treasurer's receipt shows cash received from Esquire Phillips for fines imposed, among which was one for 5s. on Joseph Lilly "for uttering one profane oath." There is a tradition that when the fine was imposed, Lilly, who was an odd character, and the hero who brought the guns back from Pelham in Shays' time, put in his plea for clemency beginning as follows, "Well now Squire, this is too D—n bad." "Tut, Tut," said the Squire, "Be careful, Lilly, or I shall have to fine you again."

In spite of his poor orthography, the decisions of Esquire Phillips seem to have been highly respected for the fairness and good judgment shown, for he had important cases from adjoining towns before him, both as justice and arbitrator. He died in 1800, and is buried in the old part of the Plain Cemetery.

Ephraim Williams came here in 1771. In 1769, the Proprietors voted "Encouragement to Daniel Williams to build a saw mill South of Lot No. 52, 2nd division." This was at the north end of what is now Spruce Corner. Daniel was the father

of Ephraim and had married a descendant of Capt. Ephraim Hunt and very likely inherited some land here from him. He had also bought out certain "Rights" from some of the other soldiers. Before Ephraim settled here it is probable that both he and his father looked the town over and finally fixed on the spot in Spruce Corner, then uninhabited, as a desirable site for the sawmill. In 1771, Ephraim and a millwright came here on foot from Easton, a hundred and twenty miles, bringing on their backs tools to build the mill and a little lumber besides. Rev. Francis Williams in a paper read at a Williams gathering, and quoted in the Ellis book, tells how he built his cheap cabin first, then his mill, covering it with boards sawed after the running part was finished. The millwright's bill for services was \$13.33. Ephraim went back to Easton in 1775, was married, and with a four wheeled cart and two yoke of oxen brought his bride with furniture, and so forth, to Ashfield. He lived on the old place till 1800, when, his sons becoming old enough to carry on the mill and farm, he built the house where Clarence Hall now lives and spent the rest of his life there. He was an excellent business man for himself, and was early called upon to do service for the town. He was selectman ten years, town treasurer three years, and representative to the General Court eleven years, also clerk and treasurer of the Congregational Church for many years.

He was the leading surveyor of the town and had a better knowledge of the old original lots as laid out than any other man. By reference to the plan in the clerk's office of these original lots, it will be seen that some are not numbered and that there are gores or strips of land between the lots. These were called "undivided lands," and were sold out from time to time by the Proprietors, and Esquire Williams, from his knowledge, was able to secure some good bargains. Spruce Corner meadows, being at that time very wet and swampy, were not laid out in lots at all, as shown on the plan. The hundred acre lot north of No. 10, 3rd division, was not numbered and is now the farm of F. H. and Charles Smith, originally given by Esquire Williams to his son, David, great-grandfather of Charles Smith.



Another son, Apollos, settled at the upper end of the meadow gore in Spruce Corner. Another smaller gore will be noticed in the northwest part of the town near where Ezra Williams settled, and also in the north part of the town where Herbert Clark now lives, is another gore where the son Israel settled. At the time of the trouble between Ashfield and Goshen in the nineties, the Proprietors voted to employ Esquire Williams to try and find the line between this town and Goshen, provided he would take his pay in land, and he did the work; was evidently not afraid of real estate currency. In the old tax list of 1793, his tax on real estate was more than twice as high as that of any other man in town. In settling his boys he helped them to buy other desirable lots near these gores for their farms, thus inducing them to remain in town, where they made substantial and valuable citizens until their death. There is an old record book of the justice trials before him in possession of his descendants, and Fred Kelley, another descendant, has the compass with which his surveying was done.

Esquire Williams was a very public-spirited man. Two rooms in the chamber of his new house had folding doors between, and when open made a good sized hall which was free to the public for religious meetings and other purposes. Rev. Alvan Sanderson at one time had evening schools there, where, it was said, that among other things "good behavior" was taught.

The town records show that in December, 1787, Esquire Williams was chosen delegate to the convention for the adoption of the federal constitution and was instructed "to use his influence that said constitution doth not take place," but the state records show that said constitution did take place by a vote of 187 to 168, and that Esquire Williams voted for it in spite of his instructions.

The following was written by Mr. Ranney for the Ellis book:

#### HON. ELIJAH PAINE

Conspicuous among the prominent men of the town was Elijah Paine, Esq., a lawyer, who settled in this village near the close of the last century, and spent the remainder of his days



here. He was a son of Dr. Elijah Paine, of Hatfield and Williamsburg; was born in Hatfield, Nov. 29, 1760, graduated at Yale in 1790, and died Aug. 3, 1846, aged 85. He married, July 1, 1795, Patty Pomeroy, of Northfield. She died Jan. 28, 1842, aged 69. Esquire Paine became a man of much usefulness and influence in the community; of sterling character with dignified bearing, and manners of a gentleman of the old school; a ruffle on his bosom was always a part of his attire. He served as a member of each branch of the legislature; and, on the division of the old county, in 1811, was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Sessions, and held the office some fifteen years, until it was abolished by law. For many years he was a deacon of the Congregational Church, and three of his sons—Elijah, William P. and John C.—became clergymen.

About 1795, Esquire Paine built a one-story house just in front of where the house of Henry M. and Elizabeth Smith now stands, and occupied it until his death. In the records of the early Justice trials Esquire Paine's name appears as counsel in a majority of the cases.

THOMAS WHITE, ESQ.

came here from Whately, (then Hatfield) in 1795 and built what is called the old White Homestead opposite the town hall and now occupied by a granddaughter, Mrs. Amanda Hall. He was chosen selectman in 1807, was on the board for twelve years, and also represented the town in the legislature several times. He held a commission as Justice of the Peace, trying most of the cases in the long kitchen of his dwelling house. This was the custom in those days, and being open to the public, the wives of the magistrates had their full share in the "cleaning up" afterwards. Esquire White was an active friend of the old Academy, educating his own children there, and assisted Mary Lyon in her early efforts to obtain an education. He died in 1848, aged seventy-five years.

The following tribute to her grandfather has been kindly given by Mrs. Amanda Hall:

"All we can ever do for the dead is to keep their names from dying, and to kindle other souls as they kindled ours."

In response to request, I will state some facts as I recall them from memory or through tradition, of my grandfather.

Thomas White was born in Hatfield, youngest son of Dea. Salmon White (who served as Captain in the Revolution). The home, in a subdivision of the borough, fell west of the dividing line between that town and Whately, where it now stands in good preservation, and is still occupied by lineal descendants. Thomas White and Elijah Paine of Williamsburg, first cousins and intimate comrades through life, fitted for college together and entered Yale in the same class. Thomas soon decided on a business career, in which he saw little use for dead languages, and so informed his father, who with comfortable means had destined his son to one of the professions. In serious displeasure the father said to the unyielding boy, "If not college, it is a trade and that trade shall be blacksmithing." Quite on his mettle, Thomas accepted the terms, served faithfully his apprenticeship, and then, receiving from his father a tract of land in Ashfield with other property, he located here and loyally set up a shop.

Meanwhile Elijah Paine had received his degree, and, locating on adjoining land, opened a law office. The two men built their houses at about the same time, bringing to them wives of rare qualities and blessed memory, and lived side by side in brotherly harmony to old age. Since my remembrance it was said that when both were in town they never failed of daily visits at one or other, or both of the two homes.

Thomas White soon found his sphere in active public service as our town and county records testify. He had the "courage of his convictions," never shrinking from duty, however unpopular, in church or town; and ever alert for advancement on new lines, was active and earnest in both. "The greatest good to the greatest number" was his slogan, and though kind and generous to a fault he was unsparing and firm where vital principles were involved. In any community such a man finds enemies. He had his full share whom he never feared, dodged nor spited. Dr. G. Stanley Hall's father, a citizen of like character in the next generation, while speaking of my grandfather's character, life and work, said to me one day, "I verily believe no man was ever laid to rest in this town who was more reverently loved or more cordially hated than Esquire White."\*

With nearly nineteen years of only happy personal memories of that life and character, I could reverently respond to the opinion of this discerning, appreciative friend.

Amanda Ferry Hall.

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\*NOTE—Edward Stewart White, the well known western writer, is a descendant of Esq. White.

## HENRY BASSETT, ESQ.

An old record book in clean, clear cut handwriting shows trials before Esquire Bassett from 1816 to 1837. He lived in an old fashioned one-story house standing where his grandson, Isaac Bassett, now lives. He was town clerk thirteen years, town treasurer five years, and Representative to the General Court seven years. Many of the cases tried before him were from Hawley and Buckland. One case in 1835 showed that on complaint of Charles Ward, Jonathan Smith, Jr., was fined one dollar for behaving rudely and indecently within the walls of public worship, and under the same date on complaint of Jonathan Smith, Jr., Charles Ward was fined the same sum for the same offence.

One hundred and more years ago, "going to law" seemed to have been a frequent and not very expensive matter. It has been noted that the full record book of Esquire Phillips showed over three hundred trials in about two years and a half and there were probably several hundred more before his death in 1800. Esquire Williams had over two hundred recorded in his book, and there were of course many cases before Esquires Paine and White of which we have no record. Cases also went from Ashfield to Buckland and Conway to be tried before Esquire Taylor and Esquire Billings. The "Costs of Court" before Esquire Phillips were from one to ten shillings, and before Esquire Williams and Esquire Bassett from three to twelve dollars. In 1827, before Esquire Williams, Consider McFarland sued Peter Sears for \$20, and recovered 86 cents and costs, \$3.07.

Other justices in town were Levi Cook, the first postmaster, also town clerk and treasurer for several years; Chester Sanderson, Lot Bassett, Wait Bement, Henry S. Ranney, Silas Blake and Nelson Gardner. Chester Sanderson lived where Clayton Eldredge now lives, was selectman and representative. His daughter married Henry L. Dawes of Pittsfield, United States Senator for many years. Henry S. Ranney, our town clerk for half a century, held a justice commission for many years, nearly to the time of his death in 1899. Esquire Bement lived at South Ashfield on the farm now owned by Mrs. Nellie

Barrus. He held most of the town offices, and was for a long time clerk, and a warm friend of the Ashfield Library. He had a genial nature and was a very pleasant man to meet. Lot Bassett lived in Spruce Corner at the Bassett farm on the hill. He was a strong and ready debater, and a great favorite at the old district lyceums. Silas Blake held a commission as justice and after the passage of the law in 1859, creating trial justices, was appointed to that office which he held for a number of years. He was school committeeman many years. He lived towards the south end of the Briar Hill road. Nelson Gardner, for eighteen years town treasurer, also held a justice commission for a time. He had a wood-working establishment in the village, afterwards in Spruce Corner.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REVOLUTION

In addition to Dr. Shepard's excellent account of the action of the town during the Revolution, we quote from the records:

Aug. 22, 1775, Voted 2nd, to make the coats that are asinde to us.

3. Voted to send a man to Albanah to procure Guns and ammunition upon the town credit.

4. Voted that Lt. Phillip Phillips to procure the above sd. articles.

Dec. 26, 1776, Voted yt the Committee of Safety be empowered to apply to the neighboring Towns for a County Convention to get into regulation concerning Prices of Provisions &c.

Voted yt the Committee of Safety put a stop to ye carrying of Grain out of town.

Feb. 20, 1777, Voted to make application to the general Court for the abatement of the Province tax.

June 16, 1777, Voted that the constables proceed to collect the ministerial taxes forthwith which are not collected and to make Distress under the Instruction of a Committee yt shall be appointed.

In the early part of the war the people seemed to have been troubled more by their financial embarrassment than by the raising of men. The Proprietors and the town had spent heavily in fulfilling the conditions of the Grant to "build a meeting house and settle a learned orthodox minister," and by the decision of the King in 1770 the support of the Baptists had been cut off, so it left this incumbrance on the rest of the town. In 1773, they petitioned to the General Court for relief, and in the Act relative to the matter, passed March of that year, Sec. 8 says: "That the inhabitants of the town of Ashfield aforesaid, exclusive of the Baptists there, be at the charge of finishing the meeting house in said town and supporting the said Mr. Sherwin for the future. Sec. 9. That by reason of the unhappy difficulties that have arisen of late in said town of Ashfield, and their poverty, the inhabitants of said town and their estates be and

hereby are exempted from paying province and county taxes for the space of three years next coming." Some money had been paid back to the Baptists for alleged injuries. At the beginning of the war, the meetinghouse, though occupied, was still unfinished. Mr. Sherwin had just been dismissed from the ministry, with his salary, as he claimed, in arrears for quite a large sum. Votes following direct the officer to immediate collection.

But there were other troubles. Dr. Shepard mentions the list reported by the selectmen of the "men who appear so unfriendly to ye American states." The names reported were Samuel Belding, Lieut. Phillip Phillips, Seth Wait, Samuel Allen, Jr., Wait Broughton, Asa Bacon, Elijah Wait, Jesse Edson and Daniel Bacon. It was "Voted yt Capt. Samuel Bartlett's house be the place of Confinement." Also "yt the Confinement of Jesse Edson be suspended for the present on the Account of sickness in his Family." August 29, 1777, it was "Voted not to make any further Provision for the Guard, and to Dismiss the Prisoners in close Confinement." The house where they were confined under guard for seven days was on the old road running over the hill just southeast of the road built by Mr. Belding which terminates near the house occupied by Dr. Jones. It stood near Mr. Bronson's spring house. Aunt Betty Perkins, a near neighbor to Charles Hall's grandfather, used to tell how she saw the prisoners march down under guard to the old church on Sunday to attend service, and how the guard took their muskets into church with them.

After this, instead of being at the expense of imprisoning the offenders, they were fined, some of them quite heavily at different times. After the lapse of one hundred and thirty-five years we can afford to be charitable towards the actors in those proceedings on both sides. Samuel Belding was one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace and had taken his oath to support the King. Lieut. Phillip Phillips was an officer in the King's army and had sworn to support the Crown. It is fairer for us to assume that all these men held these views from really conscientious motives, and not from cowardice.



Quite a number of men from these families enlisted in the American army.

At a meeting held June 20, 1777, the record says, "The question was put whether the town will give the Rev. Nehemiah Porter Liberty to Join the Continental Army—past in the Negative." It seems, however, that Mr. Porter did go, for January 9, 1778, it was "Voted yt we hire preaching while Mr. Porter is absent from his people and yt the town desire ye Rev. Jacob Sherwin to preach in Mr. Porter's absence."

We can quote only a portion of the votes relating to the later years of the war. March, 1778, "Voted to raise £50 for the support of the Continental soldiers belonging to this town." March 21, Voted £93 additional, and "That the Committee take the most prudent method they can to convey the things provided to Headquarters near Philadelphia, and to hire money if need be to effect the same." January 18, 1779, "Voted to raise money to pay the rations of ye men to Valley Forge £17 10s. also to pay for the blankets provided for said men £25 4s." June 29, 1779, a committee was chosen "to consult what method is most proper to come into Order to Encourage Men to engage in ye war," then adjourned for three-quarters of an hour. After adjournment, the report of the committee read and adopted was, that "those men who engage in a nine months tour in the war be allowed in addition to the Bounty allowed by the Court 40s. a month wages stated upon Wheat at  $4/6$  pr Bushel Rie  $3/4$  and Indian corn at  $2/6$  and if any man have a Family which shall stand in Need of Bread corn it shall be provided at said prices at the cost of the town." July 6, Voted "That such men as shall be drafted shall be entitled to the same pay." July 13, additional bounties are voted payable upon "Return home from ye Army to be considered in Continental currency at ye present Value of it." Also, "that the Select Men give Security for ye Money they shall hire for said purpose allowing ye Interest and Sink of Money."\*

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\*This "Sink in Money" was enormous. Fiske's American Revolution says, "At the end of the year 1778 the paper dollar was worth sixteen cents, and before the end of the year it took ten paper dollars to make a cent."

The next year, as Dr. Shepard relates, twenty calves were offered as bounty for three years' men. Out of the six hundred inhabitants then living in Ashfield over one hundred men went to the war, a list of whose names are here given as published by the state from the manuscripts in the Old Archives.

It will be noticed in the list afterwards given that many of the men were enlisted about the 20th of April, 1775. This was the time of the Lexington alarm. At that time a company marched from Ashfield to Boston under Capt. Samuel Bartlett. As there was no immediate fighting, a part of the men came home, others enlisted for the season. The men who came home are the men credited for five days' service.

The other list of men for five days was at the 17th of August, 1777. Word had been received that a body of British from Burgoyne's army were marching towards Bennington to seize the stores there. A company was quickly raised under Capt. Ephraim Jennings to march over the mountain. The battle was fought the 16th and the Ashfield company was too late to have any share in General Stark's victory. Just how far they marched before they heard the news we do not know. They are credited here with only five days' service. The Berkshire men received their notice earlier and arrived in time to take part in the battle.

Of the four Ashfield captains, Capt. Samuel Bartlett moved to York State; Captain Cranson lived and died in Spruce Corner. \*Capt. Benjamin Phillips lived near the old Phillips' fort south of Church and Broadhurst's, where the old cellar hole and well can still be seen. He had five sons. \*Capt. Ephraim Jennings lived near the Wardville schoolhouse and the mow lot opposite is still called the "Jennings Lot." It is singular that of these two last named captains who took so active a part in the war, none of their descendants are here, neither can we learn when they left town or where they went.

Of the 173 or more names here following it is believed that all were Revolutionary soldiers from Ashfield. Most of them were credited directly to this town. A few names are given in

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\*See Appendix.

the record, not credited to any town, but who were living here about that time and were under Capt. Benjamin Phillips' or Capt. Ephraim Jennings' companies where most of the Ashfield men enlisted and it was considered proper to call them Ashfield soldiers. This list is culled from over 150,000 names in the sixteen volumes of the state records. Not all the record of each name is given, but these volumes can be found in any public library of the state and anyone desiring to see the whole record can easily find it, as the volumes are arranged alphabetically. In a few cases the names of men known to have been Revolutionary soldiers have not been found in the record.

Barnabas Alden, two enlistments, July, 1779 and July 1780; age 20; lived afterward above the Elisha Wing place. Ebenezer Alden, several enlistments, one for 3 yrs.; lived where S. P. Elmer does. David Alden, two short enlistments; age 22 yrs.; Elijah Alden was in most of the time through the war; age 25; Isaiah Alden. John Alden, age 16; enlisted three years; Feb., 1782, reported deceased. John Abel, age 19; enlisted 1778; three years or during the war. Enoch Allen, three short enlistments. Lieut. Samuel Allen, three enlistments from April, 1775 to 1778; was also the Shays' captain in the Rebellion; lived on the Luther Guilford place. Lieut. Edward Anable enl. at 18 yrs., and served through the war, (see extended notice in Ellis book). Samuel Anable, Jr., father of Edward, two enlistments.

Joseph Baker, two short enlistments in 1775. Lot Bassett enl. from Yarmouth; three short enlistments from 1776 to '78; afterwards moved to Ashfield (Spruce Corner.) Capt. Samuel Bartlett three enlistments from 1775 to '78; lived on cross road near Mr. Bronson's spring house east of Dr. Jones'; brother to Dr. Bartlett. Samuel Bardwell, age 41 yrs.; two enlistments after 1780. Asa Bacon, in service about 100 days; lived in Baptist Corner. Benjamin Barne, one short and one three years' enlistment; age 39 yrs. John Beals enl. Dec. 1776; dis. April 1777; marched to Ticonderoga. (Spruce Corner.) Bethuel Benton, three short enlistments. Lowden Benton, age 24 yrs.; in service 9 mos. Bezer Benton, age 24 yrs.; several enlistments, last for 9 mos.; Bentons lived on Isaac Hodgen farm. Lieut. Zebulon Bryant, several enlistments from April 19, 1775 to August, 1777; grandfather of Calvin and great grandfather of Dr. Ward Bryant of Greenfield; he lived where Ralph Tredick now does. Asa Burton, 18 days; marched to Stillwater. Azariah Blanchard, two short enlistments. Phineas Bement, three enlistments

from Dec. '76 to Aug. '79. John Bement, age 19 yrs.; enl. Aug. '77; service 1 mo. 8 days; also in July, '80 for 6 mos.; probably son of John Bement who lived on the Dr. Murray place. Timothy Bloodworth, three enlistments to March '77; lived in So. Ashfield near where Darwin Pease lives. Samuel Belding rec. pay for mileage, etc., at Dorchester Heights, Nov. 28, 1776. John Belding, age 19 yrs.; in service 3 mos. 10 days; marched to Ticonderoga; was grandfather to Belding Bros.; lived on Lot No. 49 1st Div. Jonathan Belding enl. July, '77; dis. Aug. '77.

Josiah Cook, a few months in '76; lived in north part of Baptist Corner. Nathan Cook (see page 305, Ellis book). Timothy Catlin enl. from Deerfield; enl. several times from Aug. '75 to '78; his face was scarred by wounds received; he moved to Ashfield and lived where Samuel Hale does. Benjamin Carr, in service from Sept. 22 to Oct. 18, '77; expedition to the northward. (David, Benjamin and Jonathan Carr were evidently in for several months each the last part of the war. Lived east part of Baptist Corner.) Jeremiah Center, from May 4, '75 to Aug. 4, '75. Stephen Cross, from Sept. 22, '77 to Oct. 18, '77; service on expedition to the northward. John Cross, age 16 yrs.; three months' enlistment near close of war. Benjamin Crittenden, corporal in Capt. Moses Harvey's Co.; enl. May, 1775; served 2 mos. 2 weeks, 1 day. Samuel Crittenden, corporal in Capt. Benjamin Phillips' Co.; enl. July 10, 1777; service 1 mo. 8 days in Northern department. Amos Crittenden enl. April 27, 1775; service 3 mos. 11 days; was also in Arnold's expedition to Canada and was for a time held prisoner at Quebec. Simeon Crittenden enl. Aug. 12, 1781; service 3 mos. 2 days. Company raised for 3 mos. roll dated Deerfield. (Simeon was grandfather of Mr. George Crittenden. They lived on what is now Mr. Barnes' farm). Isaac Clark, sergeant in company raised for service at Ticonderoga, Feb. 24, '77, 1 mo. 17 days, again Aug. 17, '77; service 5 days. Silas Clark, in service in fall of '75 also in the 5 days' expedition northward in Aug. '77; great grandfather of Herbert Clark; lived last where Fred Kelley does. Japheth Chapin enl. March 2, '77, service 1 mo. 10 days; also Aug. 12, '77, service 3 mos. 29 days; was taken prisoner in eastern New York but escaped with another soldier and found his way through the woods to Ashfield\*. Nathan Chapin enl. May 16, '77, service 2 mos. 1 day;

\*Tradition gives the story that Japheth with another soldier was sent under one guard to cut grass on an island in the river. A bottle of rum was sent with their provisions. The guard showed a weakness for the bottle, which was encouraged, the result being that before noon he was in a drunken stupor. The prisoners took advantage of the situation, pushed off with the boat for the opposite shore, and struck into the woods towards home.

also Sept. 20, '78, service 2 mos. 23 days; Japheth was grandfather and Nathan great grandfather of Arthur and George Chapin. Asa Cranson enlisted for 3 yrs., April 2, 1779; was in several companies. Ebenezer Cranson, in service in '76, also 5 days in Aug., '77, also 1 mo. in Sept., and Oct. '77, also 9 mos. man in '78. Capt. Elisha Cranson appointed captain of list to raise men to go to Canada, also commissioned captain May 3, '76, resigned 1780. The Cransons lived across the road from the brick house now occupied by Mr. Streeter.

Wm. Darby engaged for the town of Montague; also in service prior to this. John Darby in Captain Bartlett's company, year not given. Thomas Dunton in 5 days' expedition in Aug., '77.

Levi Eldredge enl. Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 22, '77. Benjamin Ellis, two enlistments in 1775, in May and October. David Ellis, age 17 yrs.; enlisted Aug. 12, 1780, service 5 mos. 6 days. John Ellis enl. May 7, 1775; service 3 mos. 7 days; also Lieut. in the 5 day expedition Aug. '77; also in Sept. and Oct., same year. Richard Ellis. Gad Elmer, Aug. 17, '77; 5 day expedition.

Bildad Flower enl. May 8, '75; service 2 mos. 27 days; also engaged April 18, '81 for three years. Lamrock Flower, Aug. 17, '77, service 5 days; also July 24, '80, engaged for 3 mos. David Frary enl. June 10, '75; in service that summer. Julius Frary enl. May 22, '75; service 2½ mos.; also fifer Capt. Phillips' Co.; Dec. 23, '76, service 100 days at Ticonderoga; also July 10, '79, service 33 days, and in 1780 enl. for 3 mos.; age 25 yrs. Aaron Fuller, age 41 yrs.; July 19, '80, service 13 days, also in service afterwards as 6 mos. man. Isaac Fuller, in muster roll dated at Ticonderoga enl. to expire March 25, '77. Josiah Fuller, age 16 yrs.; July 15, '79; service 9 mos. Julius Fuller, bounty receipt dated May 21, '81, to serve 3 yrs. Cornelius Fuller, name not found in state list but called killed in battle by Mr. B. Howes' list. Solomon Fuller in Capt. Jennings' Co. sent to Bennington, Aug 17, '77; service 5 days. Ebenezer Forbush, several enlistments from Worcester County.

Uriah Gooding (Goodwin), four enlistments from Dec. '76 to Dec. '80; age 42 yrs. Jonathan Gould enl. Capt. Benj. Phillips Co., Dec. '76; 100 days at Ticonderoga; also engaged April 2, '79 for 2 yrs. in Capt. Elisha Cranson's Co. Stephen Graves, May 10, '77, 2 mos. 6 days; also several lists afterwards; Graves claimed by Leverett and Ashfield, allowed to Ashfield. (Also see receipt copied by Mr. B. Howes, and in Ellis book.) Robert Gray enlisted from Pelham; enl. May 1, '75, service 3 mos. 8 days; also Sept. 23, '77, service 1 mo. 1 day, (Moved to Briar Hill). Samuel Guilford, Spencer, afterwards



Ashfield, three enlistments from April '75 to Dec. '77, (So. Ashfield). Four Joseph Gurneys given from Abington, one of which probably moved to Ashfield, (Spruce Corner).

John J. Hankey, age 38; "engaged Apr. 22, '82, for town of N. Ashfield for 3 years." Solomon Hill, enlisted at Bridgewater; three short enlistments, one for 9 mos. at "North River." (Moved to Spruce Corner.) Elisha Howes, enl. Aug. '77; service 5 days on expedition to northern department at the time of the battle of Bennington. Kimball Howes, same as Elisha. (Lived in New Boston.) Zachariah Howes enl. May 10, '77; service 2 mos. 8 days, (see also receipt from selectmen in B. Howes' book and in Ellis book p. 305). (From Briar Hill—brother to Micajah).

Capt. Ephraim Jennings, named as Sergeant, Lieut. and Capt.; four short enlistments from April '75 to Aug. '79. (Most of the Ashfield soldiers were in his or Capt. Phillips' Co.) (Lived in Wardville, near schoolhouse.) Anthony Jones, four enlistments to Oct. '77; reported as being in Quebec expedition.

Abner Kelley, service at Ticonderoga in May and June, '77, (see also town receipt). (Cape Street, south end.) Jacob Kilburn. Simeon King, three enlistments from May, '75 to Dec. '80, one for 3 yrs.

Ziba Leonard, three short enlistments; went from Bridgewater; came to Ashfield; lived in Apple Valley where Mrs. E. P. Williams does. Stephen Lyon, three enlistments first part of war; reported having gone to Quebec. Isaac Lewis, age 25 years; two enlistments, April, '75, 2 mos. 11 days; also 6 mos. man in '80. Timothy Lewis, age 16 yrs.; two enlistments about 3 mos. each, '79 and '80. (Timothy Lewis' family lived northwest of where Allison Howes now does.) Joseph Lilly, two enlistments in '75. (Shays man, lived opposite Geo. Ward house below Mrs. Underhill's.) Bethuel Lilly, age 18 yrs.; list dated July 24, '80; also enl. Aug. 12, '81 for 3 mos. (Said to have been guard at the execution of Andre); owned farm in New Boston now occupied by his great grandson Frederick. Jonathan Lilly, sergeant, enl. Aug. 12, '75, service 1 mo. 8 days, (father of Bethuel; lived about 50 rods above his great grandson, Allison Howes). Samuel Lincoln, age 16 yrs.; service 6 mos. in 1780; in '81 engaged for 3 yrs. Eliphalet Lindsley, May 10, '77; service 2 mos. 8 days; also July 29, '80 for 3 mos.; (name in town receipt). James Linsey enl. June 15, '75; service 1 mo. 18 days. Aaron Lyon, 2 enlistments, Jan. 6, '77, also Sept. 22, '77. Jonathan Lyon, age 21; enl. July 21, '80; service 4 mos. 21 days; also July 21, '81 for 3 yrs.; pensioned '82 for loss of



left arm. Nathan Lyon, five enlistments from April 26, '75 to Aug. 21, '77.

Calvin Maynard, given by Mr. B. Howes, but we are not able to locate him in state list. Alexander McIntire, Aug. 17, '77; service 5 days. Thomas McIntire enl. April 22, '75; service 5 days; also April 27, '75; service 3 mos. 11 days. Stephen Merrill enl. Jan. 6, '77, service 86 days. Daniel Miles, Feb. 24, '77, 1 mo. 17 days; also May 10, '77, service about 2 mos.; also July 21, '80, enl. for 6 mos.; also old receipt in town papers for "six shillings for carrying my Pack from Ashfield to Benningtown." Barnabas or Bernice McNitt, reported 8 mos. man.

Caleb Packard, service 15 days; enlisted from Bridgewater, (moved to Spruce Corner). Joseph Ruggles Paine enl. July 10, '77; service 30 days. Daniel Perkins died in the service aged about 25. Eliab Perkins, Aug. '77, service 5 days; Bennington. Timothy Perkins enl. Sept. 22, '77; service about 1 mo.; died in a military hospital in N. Y. Benjamin Phillips, in list of officers chosen May 3, '76; April 19, '75, in service 5 days; also April 27, '75, in service 3 mos. 11 days; afterwards reported as having gone to Quebec; mentioned as captain at Ticonderoga and elsewhere; also mentioned in Phillips' Genealogy as prisoner at Quebec for a while. Caleb Phillips enl. Dec. 10, '77; in service most of the time for 2 yrs. Daniel Phillips, in service through summer of '75; afterwards enlisted for 3 yrs. Elijah Phillips enl. Sept. 17, '76; 120 miles mileage allowed. Elijah Phillips, age 16; enl. July 19, '79, for 9 mos. Pierce Phillips, Aug. 7, '80; service 6 days. Thomas Phillips, in service summer of '75; enl. May 7, '75. Ziba Phillips, '78, a 9 mos. man.

Francis Ranney enlisted from Connecticut. Moses Rawson enlisted from Grafton, April 26, '77, for 3 yrs.; lived just over the line in Buckland; buried in Northwest cemetery. Zephaniah Richmond enlisted from Taunton; service 2 mos. 20 days from Dec. '76. Benjamin Rogers enl. Sept. 22, '77, dis. Oct. 18, '77. Henry Rogers enlisted several places; in last part of war, from Ashfield; died in the service. John Rogers enl. Jan. 9, '77 for 3 yrs.

John Sadler, age 18; term 8 mos.; also July 21, '80; service 2 mos. 25 days. Elias Sawyer enl. Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 21, '77. Jonathan Sears enlisted from Harwich, July 10, '75; service 6 mos. 7 days; also served in Capt. Bangs' Co.; also three more enlistments to Sept. 7, '78; moved to Cape Street.

Paul Sears, July 10; service 38 days. Richard Sears. Roland Sears, April 20, '75, service 5 days: April 26, '75, service 3 mos.

11 days; also Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 21, '77. Asa Selden, age 28; July 21, '80, service 4 mos. 28 days. Azariah Selden, July '78, 19 days' service; also one other enlistment. Isaac and Jesse Selden, June 25, 1779, service 5 mos. 6 days. Joseph Shaddock, 6 mos. man for 1780; also enl. Sept. 22, '77; dis. Oct. 2, '77. Daniel Shaw enl. April 22, '77 for 5 days; then reënlisted for the summer; afterward enl. for 3 yrs. Charles Simpson. Elisha Smith, muster roll at Ticonderoga, Feb. '77; on command at the mills; also Jan. 6, '77, service 80 days; also enl. Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 22, '77. Ebenezer Smith, also in old French War. Enos Smith enl. July 10, '77; dis. Aug. 12, '77; service in Northern department. Jedediah Smith, age 26; July 19, '80, 6 mos. man. Jonathan Smith, age 19; July 21, '80, enl. 6 mos. Joseph Smith enl. Aug. 17, '77. Moses Smith, not able to locate in state list but Mr. B. Howes reports him as killed. Nehemiah Smith, age 16; enl. July 21, '80, service 2 mos. 29 days; also enl. April 7, '81, 3 yrs. Preserved Smith—Mr. Ellis says he entered service in '75 when only 16—records give Dec. 23, '76; service 100 days; reported on command at blockhouse, this at Ticonderoga; also May 10, '77; dis. July 8, '77; also Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 21, '77; also Aug. 26, '77, service 3 mos. 23 days. Simeon Smith enl. May 4, '75, service 3 mos. 3 days. Benjamin Sprague enl. May 8, '75, service 1 mo. 12 days; also afterwards enl. for 8 mos. Nehemiah Sprague, 5 days in service April 22, '75, on Lexington alarm; also 3 mos. 11 days through the season of '75; also enl. Sept. 22, '77; dis. Oct. 18, '77. Jonathan Sprague enl. July 10, '77; service 38 days. Laban Stetson enlisted from Abington on Lexington alarm; also four other short enlistments to 1780; (Moved to Spruce Corner where he was buried.) Lemuel Stocking, age 21; was in service in '77; also enl. July 1, '80 for 6 mos.

Ezekiel Taylor enl. May 10, '77; dis. July 8, '77; also enl. Aug. 17, '77, in service 3 mos. 20 days. Jasher Taylor, in service through season of '75; also engaged May 16, '81 for 3 years. Stephen Taylor, age 17; July 19, '79, engaged for 9 mos. Jonathan Taylor enl. July 10, '77, service 30 days; also enl. Sept. 22, '77; dis. Oct. 16, '77. Jonathan Taylor, Jr., enl. Sept. 22, '77; dis. Oct. 18, '77; also enl. July 20, '77, service 30 days. Henry Taylor enl. Dec. 23, '76 to Mar. 23, '77; also Aug. 17, '77 to Aug. 22, '77; also Sept. 22, '77 to Oct. 2, '77; also 9 mos. man in '78. Jason Taylor, 9 mos. man in '78. Stephen Taylor, 2nd, age 20; in '80 engaged for 3 mos. David Vincent, July 1, '77; served 5 mos., 19 days; enl. from Cape. (Moved to Ashfield, Northwest.)

Asa Wait enl. May 10, '77; dis. July 8, '77. Elijah Wait. Caleb Ward enl. June 17, '75; service 1 mo. 17 days. Daniel Ward enl. Aug. 17, '77; dis. Aug. 21, '77. John Ward, age 59; enlisted for Buckland July 2, '80, for 6 mos. Joseph Warren enl. July 10, '77; dis. Oct. 18, '77. Timothy Warren, age 19; in 1780 enlistment for 6 mos.; '81 enl. 3 yrs. Cornelius Warren, not on state list, but Mr. B. Howes reports him as killed. Luther Washburn enl. May 13, '75, service 2 mos. 24 days; also April 22, '79, enlisted for the war. Isaac Washburn, April 22, '75 to April 26, '75; also enl. April 27, '75, service 3 mos. 11 days; also 3 mos. at Ticonderoga. Samuel Washburn, the 5 days' service after Lexington alarm; also 3 mos. 11 days that season. Joshua Whelden, in service season of '76; also enl. Sept. 22, '77; dis. Oct. 18, '77. Stephen Warren. Jonathan Yeomans.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CEMETERIES

The "History of the Connecticut Valley" and the Ellis book both assume that the Baptist Corner Cemetery is the oldest in town, but there does not seem to be proof that the first burial in the town was there. Jane Phillips, wife of Richard Ellis, died in 1760 and the Ellis monument in Beldingville bears testimony to her burial here. A letter of Aaron Smith of Stockton, N. Y., in 1851, to his cousin Ziba, quoted in the Ellis book, page 402, writes of a sister of Chileab being the first person buried in the Baptist burial ground. By looking at the births given in the Smith genealogy it seems highly probable that this burial was subsequent to that in Beldingville. It is quite possible that both the Beldingville and Plain Cemeteries were occupied before that in Baptist Corner. In 1767, a child of Jonathan Lilly was buried back of where the meetinghouse was to stand on the Plain. A small stone still standing marks the spot. December 17, 1769, in town meeting it was "Voted to purchase a piece of land by the meeting house for a Burying Place; also voted and chose Mr. Nathan Wait and Capt. Moses Fuller and Timothy Perkins a committee to purchase and lay out a burial place." In 1770, they purchased an acre and a half of land of Silas Lillie for 30s. This plat was the northwest corner of Lot No. 18 and was what is now the old part of the Plain burial ground. The frame of the church had been put up here in 1767, so it was decided that the burial ground must be near the church, as was the custom in those days.

In 1772, it was voted to purchase a burial place of Chileab Smith for 12s. 6d.—this the Baptist Corner yard.

Many of the older graves in the three yards are unmarked save by small rough stones without names or dates. The grave of Richard Ellis, the first settler, is marked by a substantial monument erected in the Beldingville grounds by the Ellis family in 1887. The grave of Thomas Phillips, the second

settler of the town and brother-in-law of Richard Ellis, is unmarked, but some of the Phillips descendants claim that it is directly back of the Ellis monument in the next row to the east. Heber Honestman, the negro who was one of the fifteen original members forming the Congregational Church, died in 1768 and was doubtless buried here.

Samuel Nightingale was refused burial here because he was believed to be a wizard and in league with the devil. He was buried about forty rods east of the cemetery near the foot of a large chestnut tree—now going to decay—in the edge of the first small ravine in what is now Mr. Kendrick's pasture. Dr. Ellis says of him, "One of the first settlers was Samuel Nightingale. His cabin was on the north side of the road, the back of which was built up against the face of a large rock. Nightingale was an emigrant from England, and was a man of uncommon learning but, withal, so queer in his ways that he was counted a wizard." This rock can be seen from the highway on the easterly side of Bellows Hill some fifty rods west of the Jesse Hall house. John Nightingale, probably a relative, bought land here in 1743 and had a house on the top of the hill by the road leading to the old corn mill. Nightingale is a common name in the early history of Braintree. The place where this recluse led his hermit life, and the place of his burial, was once pointed out to the writer by the grandfather of Leon Hall. The only apology that can be made for our ancestors for thus ostracising this man from his fellows in life and in death, is that they still believed that witchcraft was from his Satanic majesty and they desired to be on the safe side and avoid contamination.

Among the oldest stones here are those of Richard Ellis, Jesse Ranney, Reuben Ellis, John Ellis. These last three were Revolutionary soldiers.

There are many unmarked graves in the Baptist Corner Cemetery. The graves of the three Chileabs near together are pointed out, but are unmarked. Unless something is done to mark the spot, in a few years the location will be unknown. Several others of the Smith family who were Revolutionary soldiers are buried here. John Alden and Japheth Chapin were



also soldiers. The last named has no stone, but an iron marker at his grave. The Shepards, Lyons and Elmers are also here. The stone of the grandfather of Mary Lyon on her mother's side has this inscription: "In memory of Deacon Isaac Shepard, who departed this life May 13, 1802, aged 69 years.

A husband dear, a father kind,  
A pious heart, a patient mind;  
He's left all things below in peace,  
And gone we trust, where sorrows cease.  
His body rests beneath this bed  
Till Gabriel's trump shall wake the dead."

The stone of the father of Mary Lyon is also here and has this inscription: "Aaron Lyon, died Dec. 21, 1802, aged 45.

A loving husband, kind and true,  
A tender father was, also;  
A faithful son, a brother dear,  
A peaceful neighbor was while here.  
Though now his body here doth rest,  
We trust his soul's among the blest."

This cemetery has been sadly neglected, but a movement for its improvement has lately begun which it is hoped will be continued. The resting place of the man who so strenuously resisted religious oppression, and the ancestors of Mary Lyon should not be forgotten.

In the back part of the Plain cemetery there are many unmarked graves. Among the oldest inscriptions here are Isaac Crittenden, 1773, aged 74; Wm. Ward, 1778, aged 63; John Saddler, 1781, aged 63; Isaac Taylor, 1786, aged 76; Dr. Phineas Bartlett, 1799, aged 54. The stone at the grave of Phillip Phillips, Esq., is broken off and partly buried in the earth. It should be rescued by his descendants.

In 1860, Mr. H. S. Ranney bought of Henry Paine and the heirs of Samuel W. Hall a little over an acre of land west of and adjoining the old cemetery, had the wall removed and the plot regularly laid out into avenues and burial lots 20 ft. by 10 ft., which were put on sale for \$3 each for family lots, thus establishing system and order, of which before there had been but little.

After the organization of the Ashfield Burial Ground Association, they bought in 1890 this plot of ground for \$150 of Mr.

Ranney, he reserving the lots already sold. In 1893, they bought of Mrs. Miranda Alden two acres more on the west, making now about five acres in the whole cemetery. The grounds have been well laid out and in the main the lots are well cared for, so that the condition of the cemetery is a credit to the town.

The Northwest Cemetery is located in a lonely spot in a pasture owned by Clinton Wing in the northwest part of the town, and was laid out before 1800. People express surprise that such a place should have been selected, but at that time there was a road, a portion of which can now be traced, running from David Williams', now F. H. Smith's, over the hill westerly directly past this spot and then on by Israel Williams', now W. S. Williams' house. The oldest headstone here is that of Thomas Howes, 1793, great-great-grandfather to Allison, Albert and Abbott Howes. But few people have been buried here since 1850, excepting Mrs. Ruth Taylor, aged 99, who was buried there in 1867. The lot contains a little over one-fourth of an acre. There are about fifty graves with probably one-fourth of them unmarked. This isolated spot was seldom visited; a portion of the wall around it had fallen down so that cattle ran over the yard, and bushes and ferns were growing over it.

In 1906, Zebulon B. Taylor of Tacoma, Washington, whose boyhood days were spent in this Northwest school district, and whose parents and other relatives were buried in this yard, visited the place and decided upon a change. A substantial wall was relaid around it, the bushes cut or torn up and the ground manured and reseeded.

A quit claim deed of the yard and the right of way to it was secured conveying it to the Ashfield Burial Ground Association. Mr. Taylor employed Mr. George Howes, one of the oldest residents in that section, to obtain as far as possible a list of those buried in the unmarked graves. The next year, he came again and erected a substantial bronze monument about eight feet high, with the names of all those buried in the yard inscribed upon it. He also had a smaller monument placed over the graves of his parents. Over \$1,000 was expended in making the change.

Among the names on the larger monument are Zephaniah Richmond, Ebenezer Forbes, Oliver Rawson, a Revolutionary soldier who saw much service, and Peter Wells, after whom Peter Hill was named. His inscription reads, "Peter Wells died 1829 aged 95 years. A colored man brought from Africa and held until the Royal Government ended."

Mr. Taylor died in Los Angeles, California, in May, 1909, and left by his will a legacy of \$1,000 to the town of Ashfield, the income of which is to be applied to the perpetual care of the Northwest Cemetery.

The Spruce Corner burying ground was laid out about 1790. The wife of Capt. Elisha Cranston was buried there in 1792, Jonathan Cranston in 1799, Capt. Elisha Cranston in 1804, and Lot Bassett in 1835. The families of Jenkins, Beals, Dyers, Stetsons and Fords, settlers from Abington, are buried here. There are graves of at least eight Revolutionary soldiers in this small yard.

The cemetery on the hill or "Flat" was laid out in 1813 on land bought of Dr. Enos Smith. Its north line was about three rods south of the meeting house which was being built that year. The first person buried here was Alanson Lilly, 1814, son of Captain Bethuel and grandson of Jonathan, whose child was the first buried in the Plain ground. Two of the early ministers, Rev. Nehemiah Porter and Rev. Alvan Sanderson, also the early magistrates, Esquires Williams, Paine and Bassett, are buried here.

The stone of Abner Kelley, who died Feb. 25, 1825, aged 76, bears this quaint and original inscription:

"An apoplectic seisd my powers  
When I was not expecting death;  
The conflict lasted twenty hours,  
And then I yielded up my breath."

The hearse house stood in the northeast corner of the yard,—painted black—a conspicuous object.

After the removal of the church in 1856, the cemetery was enlarged to its present capacity, and the new part has been kept in a manner creditable to the owners of the lots.

The Briar Hill cemetery was laid out about 1820. The oldest marked stone is 1828. The earlier Grays, Smiths, also the Blakes and the Knowltons, two prominent families of the town, are buried here. This yard has been kept in good order by the people of the neighborhood.

It was formerly customary when there was no cemetery in the vicinity, to have a family burial ground. Heman Howes and some of his descendants were buried on the summit of the knoll about thirty rods northeast of the house where Myron L. Howes now lives, but the remains were afterwards moved to the Plain cemetery. Howard Edson was buried in his mowing lot, about twenty rods southwesterly from the Edson house now owned by Dana L. Graves. These remains were also removed to the Plain cemetery. A few graves of the Edson family are in the lot a few rods westerly from where Freeman Barnes lives. David Howes and wife with a few others are buried near the junction of the two roads at the top of the hill easterly from the South Ashfield post office. A few of the earlier Guilfords were buried on the Petermann place on the old road about three-fourths of a mile southerly from South Ashfield.

Seventy-five years ago there was a yard in what is now the mowing lot of Charles Lilly where about thirty people were buried. No stones were up and in the course of time the grounds were smoothed over by the plow and no trace of it now remains. Joshua Knowlton, grandfather of Nathan and Joshua, was buried here. When the "Vital Statistics of Ashfield" are published, the column designating the place of burial will be marked with many an "Unknown."

Some sixty years ago a stranger visiting the town wrote to a Greenfield paper, "During our walks about the place, we strayed into the village burying ground, but found there such a collection of unmarked graves and broken grave stones that made us hope we should never die in Ashfield. There was, however, another yard on the hill, but the hearse house near it was so hideously painted we dared not enter."

In 1862, the town voted to relinquish all claim the town had on Lot No. 54 for use of the cemetery. Lot No. 54 was school land and included the cemetery on the hill.

In 1860, mainly through the efforts of Mr. John Sprague, the South Ashfield Cemetery Association was organized, about two acres of land purchased, and a ground well laid out.

In 1875, in town meeting it was voted, "To raise \$75 to put the cemeteries in town in good condition" and a committee was chosen for that purpose.

In 1887, the Ashfield Burial Ground Association was formed and in 1889 forty-one of the leading men of the town, headed by Chauncey Boice and Charles Eliot Norton, petitioned the Legislature for an act of incorporation. It was granted that winter, giving the Association full corporate powers to perform the duties contemplated and giving it authority to hold real and personal estate to the amount of \$10,000. Chauncey Boice was elected president and A. D. Flower secretary, with five directors. After Mr. Flower's removal from town, Alvan Hall was chosen secretary and treasurer. After his decease, J. M. Sears was chosen and continued in that office until 1909, when he resigned and A. W. Howes was chosen in his stead. After the death of Mr. Boice, his son Sanford was chosen president in his place.

In 1893, the town deeded to this Association all its right and title in the old cemetery on the Plain and quit claim deeds have been secured from parties owning land adjacent to the Spruce Corner, Baptist Corner and Northwest cemeteries.

This organization is supposed not only to have an interest in all the cemeteries of the town, but is a medium by which people can insure perpetual care for individual lots. Thus, a person leaving by will \$50 or \$100 to the Association for the care of his lot is supposed to have the income of that sum, as far as needed, expended annually in keeping his lot in good condition. The Association has received over \$2,000 for this purpose. It was formed at the suggestion of Professor Norton, and has done, and is still doing, excellent work.

The early arrangements for funerals were very primitive. It is related that one of the early settlers of Cape Street, Eldridge by name, lost his young wife soon after settling here and was obliged to make the coffin himself.

For a time the town took up the undertaking business. In 1840, it was voted to buy a hearse and build a hearse house, also to have sextons for all cemeteries. A hearse house was accordingly built as has been stated, in the corner of the burial yard on the hill. It was about twelve feet square, painted black with white trimmings. In 1842, it was voted to pay for coffins and other funeral charges, and in 1844 voted to buy elliptic springs for the hearse.

The first town contract for coffins was made with Jonathan Lilly, who made them for many years. Afterwards they were made by Cyrus N. Howes. The contract was for a pine coffin properly stained, lined with cambric, with the initials and age of the deceased made with brass nails on the inside of the lid. If an extra coffin was desired, one of cherry or black walnut, this was paid for by friends of the deceased. In 1847, the total of funeral expenses, viz., a common coffin, digging and covering grave and going with hearse, averaged \$8.50.

The sexton, besides ringing the bell at noon and 9 P. M., was required to toll it at each death and then strike the age of the deceased person. In the first place the bell was rung for about five minutes to attract the attention of those within its sound, then it was tolled about half a dozen strokes with an interval of a minute between each. The age was then struck, with a brief pause between each ten. The bell was also tolled at a burial when it was to be near the church, beginning when the procession came in sight and continuing until the ceremony at the grave was completed. Undertakers and funeral directors had not then been thought of, neighbors and friends performing the kindly offices needed.

#### CASUALTIES

Dr. Shepard gives quite a full account of the drowning of five persons in 1827. The place where the boat was overturned was where the water is quite deep between the lower end of the pond and the Buckland road. About the time of the accident the stage with its load of passengers drove into the village and stopped at the hotel to change horses. One of the passengers,



a young man, hurried to the pond, threw off his clothes, dove down and brought up all the bodies, then hastily dressing, he left the town with the other passengers. In the excitement no one learned his name or residence, and the tradition of the heroic deed comes down to us with the actor unknown.

Dr. Shepard speaks of the funeral being at the house of Deacon Lyon. He lived where Addison Graves now does, and it is said that the services were held out of doors, with the five coffins arranged on the green lawn in front of the house. Dea. David Lyon was an uncle of Mary Lyon, who had been a student and a teacher here. We give this extract from a letter written by Miss Hannah White to Miss Lyon, who was then at Byfield:

I sent you two papers a few weeks since partly as a token of remembrance, and partly to give you a concise account of the late afflictive Providence. If I am permitted again to see you, I shall feel a mournful pleasure in recounting the circumstances of the affecting scene. Your Aunt Lyon reflected great honor on the cause of religion that day. It seems as though there could not be a greater triumph of grace over nature. I believe no one who saw her could refrain from acknowledging she possessed something more than nature can give. My Father bore her the surprising intelligence, which she received with the utmost composure. He first told her of her son, then of Mr. Drake, then of her grandsons, when she replied, "I am feeble, but I can sympathise with my husband in the loss of our family, I will go to him; no doubt it is his wish." He then told her he would carry her up, but she would find her dear husband in the same situation with those he had described. She replied in the words of Job, "The Lord gave" &c, and praised his name that he had left one male member of her family. Your cousin Marshall was one who escaped after the boat upset. He said after one foot rested upon solid ground, he felt the iron grasp of Drake around the other foot, but by a mighty effort he disentangled himself. He saw his brother following him, and saw him clasped by his little nephew in the same manner in which they were drawn from the water. This event has caused a general solemnity in town, but we fear it will not be lasting.

On the day of the funeral while Noah Douglass and wife were attending the services, their girl of eleven years who was left at home to care for the children, attempted to crawl through an

open window and was killed by the falling of the sash. Mr. Douglass lived at the corner of the road about half a mile below where F. H. Smith lives.

Two years after this event, one summer morning an insane person came into the house of Mr. Catlin in Baptist Corner and cut the throat of an infant from ear to ear as it lay quietly sleeping. A small broken stone in the old cemetery in that neighborhood has this inscription: Timothy, son of Timothy and Electa Catlin died July 7, 1829, aged 17 mos.

Weep not for the babe thou couldst not save,  
Oh, give it with joy to the God who first gave,  
For firm is the promise our Saviour has given  
Who said that of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

The insane man was taken to the asylum and for many years there was recorded on the town books the sum annually paid at the insane asylum for Alfred Elmer.

In 1851, Arnold Packard was killed by a large stone falling on him while building a dam for Dea. Daniel Williams of Spruce Corner.

The oldest stone in the Plain cemetery is that of a child of Jonathan Lilly who met death by falling into a tub of scalding water in 1767.

In 1838 Joseph Ranney, who lived near where Arthur Williams does, was killed by the falling of a tree. He was the father of Samuel Ranney, late of Spruce Corner.

On the afternoon of May 5, 1881, a barn belonging to the Bassett estate in Spruce Corner was burned and Miss Abigail Bassett, aged 82, perished in the flames. Her two brothers with whom she had always lived, having died not long before, she was at this time living alone in the house. Her charred body was found on the burning hay mow after the barn had nearly burned down. The embers in the fireplace in the house had recently been raked together, and it was thought that some of her woolen clothing might have caught fire, which she carried to the barn with her where she was accustomed to go to look for eggs and after she had passed up the short ladder on to the mow, the hay caught fire from the smouldering clothing.

On December 10, 1878, a great freshet swept over the Green Mountain region of this state, caused by a powerful rain falling upon fifteen inches of newly fallen snow. As evening came on, the temperature rapidly grew warm, the thermometer rose twenty-five degrees in two hours, and the melting snow filled by the accumulated rainfall of the day, came down the hillsides in torrents. At nine o'clock in the evening the Great Pond reservoir in this town, on South River, gave way, immediately draining off the seventy-five acres of water that had there been held in check, thus precipitating a great flood into the valley below. The grist mill of A. D. Flower on the stream back of the hotel and the tannery of L. C. Sanderson, at the center village, were destroyed. At South Ashfield, three dwelling houses, two barns and a blacksmith shop were swept away on the instant that the flood reached them. In the southwest part of the town, Darius Williams' reservoir broke away, carrying his large sawmill to destruction. The roads and bridges here and throughout the region were greatly damaged. Through the valley in the course of South River, the fields, fences and bridges suffered almost total destruction.

A tornado passed through the town on Sunday afternoon, May 28, 1882. The following account is from the *Gazette and Courier*:

#### THE TORNADO IN ASHFIELD

The storm was more destructive to property than any ever before witnessed in town. Two smart thunder showers coming from different directions—southerly and northwesterly—seemed to meet and unite about a mile westerly from the village, forming an awful hurricane that took a northeast course across the town. Fences, buildings and trees were like straws in its pathway and were tossed in the air like toys. The first damage done of much amount was the total wreck of Henry Lilly's barn. His house was racked so that the doors shut with difficulty if at all. The barn on the Geo. Hall place was next laid flat. Geo. Bassett's new barn was partially unroofed. The storm crossed the pond west of the village, not harming a building till it reached Williams & Stetson's barn, which it completely unroofed, carrying it more than forty rods. It also ruined three large maple trees in front of their house. No other buildings were

destroyed till the tornado reached Baptist Corner, where it completely ruined Martin Bronson's barn, the barn on the Dea. Ziba Smith place, and also Houghton Smith's new barn was torn all to pieces, some of the eight-inch timbers being carried one-fourth of a mile. Wilson Elmer, John and Chas. Hale—in the north part of Conway—each lost a barn. The storm seemed to have a particular spite toward apple and sugar orchards. But very few apple trees remain standing in the line of the storm, and George Church's and A. Shippee's sugar orchards are nearly destroyed. It seems miraculous that no houses were torn down and no one hurt seriously. E. B. Williams was in his barn when the roof was taken. He was knocked down by a falling timber and then buried beneath one of the big doors, but escaped with slight injuries.

Horace Perkins of Ashfield, eighteen years of age, was killed in 1808 while at work for Colonel Ames who was building the church in Northboro similar to our town hall. On July 1, he was on the top of the tower above the bell deck while lumber was being hoisted up to him by block and tackle and in reaching out for the ropes he lost his balance, fell headlong to the ground and was instantly killed.

Rev. Mr. Sanderson in his Diary says, "July 5, Visited at Mr. Eliab Perkins' whose son Horace was last week killed in Northboro by a fall from a meeting house frame."





TOWN HALL, ASHFIELD



## CHAPTER XV

### THE NEW MEETINGHOUSE

In 1801, "Voted to choose a Committee to fix a spot on which to set the new Meeting house." 1805, "Voted to repair the old Meeting house." In 1810, "Voted to build a new Meeting house on the spot fixed by the Committee in 1801." It was planned to place it in as near the geographical center of the town as possible, and a surveyor was employed to find that spot. An inner circle was formed touching the outer lines of the town and lines were drawn through the center of this circle to opposite sides. A plan of this survey is preserved in the clerk's office. The exact center was declared to be at the foot of the hill just below the present creamery building. But that not being a favorable location, the Committee decided to place it on the "Flat" a few rods east of where Mrs. Wright now lives. There seemed to be opposition to this and it was finally "Voted to proceed to build the Meeting house and to leave it to a disinterested Committee of three persons to decide in what place to build the Meeting house." These three men to be from Hawley, Conway and Plainfield. This Committee attended to their duty and the following is their report:

We the Subscribers being a Committee chosen by the Inhabitants of the town of Ashfield to determine on a Place proper to erect a Meeting House for public Worship, have closely attended to the Business by viewing the various Roads and by hearing the various Pleas for and against the different contemplated Places; make the following report:—viewing all matters on a fair and impartial Scale, we find a Place, which in our Opinion will accommodate the South West, West and a Part of the Northwest Section of the Town, containing about eighty-five Families; which will as well commode the other Part of the North West, North, Northeast and East Sections of said Town, containing about forty-two Families; which will also commode with no very great Expence to the Society, the whole South East Section, containing about twenty-nine Families;—and will finally accommodate the plain Section containing about eighteen Families should they exercise that Condescension Men and

Christians ought to do;—this Place we are constrained from Principles of Justice and Equity is on the Hill near the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Porter's where we have placed the stake:—

Wishing and hoping that all Party Feeling may subside and that this Christian Society may be united in the Bonds of Friendship, and love; and may live in peace; and that the God of Peace may be with them here, and at last bring them to his holy Temple in the Heavens.

We are yours

Ashfield, February the 20th 1812

Edmund Longley

Elisha Billings

John Hamlen

Eight days after, "Voted that the building Committee do place the Meeting House on the spot fixed on by the above said Committee in such a Position as they shall think proper."

As the church about to be built is the present town hall, it may be of interest to record some of the votes concerning it. A strong committee representing different sections of the town was chosen to draw a plan of the meetinghouse and appraise the pews and report at a future meeting. The committee were Dr. Enos Smith, Elijah Paine, Esq., Ephraim Williams, Esq., Thomas White, Esq., Capt. Bethuel Lilly, Levi Cook, Esq., James Andrews, Jr., Abner Kelley, Nathaniel Holmes, Joseph Hall, Elisha Wing, Capt. Benjamin Gates, Daniel Williams, Roland Sears, Capt. Samuel Dunham, and Simeon Phillips. Voted at the next meeting to accept the report of the committee, also to cover the meetinghouse with white pine clapboards and shingles, that the glass for the meetinghouse be of the size of 7 x 9. This committee was also to superintend the building of the house. January 14, 1812, \$5,000 was voted for building the house, but a month later this vote was rescinded and \$2,000 raised. Dr. Enos Smith, Elijah Paine, Esq., and Levi Cook were chosen a committee to sell the pews and collect the money therefor.

The contract for building was let to Col. John Ames of Buckland, a thorough builder. It is said that nearly two hundred thousand feet of lumber were used in its construction. Some

of the massive timbers twelve inches square, hewn smoother than if sawed in modern times, can still be seen in the loft above the hall. A large concourse of people were at the raising and Mr. Thomas Hall, father of Mrs. Lydia Miles, and grandfather of Dr. G. Stanley Hall, was one of the few men who volunteered to place the timbers in the tower and steeple.

September 4, 1813, the contractor, broken in health by hard labor, heavy responsibility and fear of loss, committed suicide by cutting his throat with a chisel in the back part of what is now the cemetery on the hill. The building was finished by the committee, but was not ready for occupancy until the summer of 1814. Its outside appearance at that time was very much as at present but the interior is thus described by one still living who gives her vivid childhood impression:

Our meeting house was the pride of our people. No meeting house in any of the surrounding towns could equal it in size or beauty. The beautiful and curious window at the west end, back of the pulpit, was a marvel in our eyes. The height of the steeple—O, it was magnificent. The sweet tone of our bell—the sweetest ever heard by mortal ears. The man of iron at the highest point showing the direction of the wind, all, all ours.

She describes the interior as one large room with a gallery on three sides instead of an upper and a lower room as at present.

A row of square, box-like pews extended along each side of the three aisles. The seats were hung on hinges on three sides of the pew. The old folks sat facing the minister, and the children facing their parents. Poor children! how often your heads got a sudden and undeserved rap! For some man being overcrowded and desiring a change of position, in placing his arm on the railing of the pew, unconsciously thrust his elbow into the bonnet and head of a little girl in the adjoining pew which vexed her greatly and did not improve her disposition or the looks of her bonnet.

In the center of the west end of the room was the wonderful pulpit, cone shaped, fluted up and down and painted a pale pea green color. It was entered by a winding stairway not visible to the children who wondered how the minister got into the pulpit.

In 1840, the house was divided into two rooms, with the audience room above equipped with more modern seats and pulpit. Outside, on the north side of the road, was a row of horse-

sheds from the Smith barn nearly to Captain Holmes' house, now Mrs. Wright's, and another row some six rods in length back of the meetinghouse.

The cemetery was a few rods southerly from the house, with the solemn looking hearse house painted black in the northeast corner.

In 1856, after the church was divided, it was decided to move the building down to the village. Mr. A. W. Howes, whose father was one of the moving committee, a few years ago wrote an account of the moving for one of our historical meetings, which we quote here:

It was voted at a meeting of the First Parish held in September, 1856, to move the Meeting house from the hill near the Cemetery to the Plain and a committee was appointed for that purpose. This committee consisted of six men, viz, David S. Howes, Joseph Vincent, Jr., Lyman Eldredge, John C. Ward, Zachariah Howes, and George Howes. The money was to be raised by subscription. Eight men of the Parish offered to give \$50 each. These men were David Vincent, Joseph Vincent, David S. Howes, Daniel Howes, Lyman Eldredge, John C. Ward and Zachariah Howes. The balance was given by many in smaller amounts. The committee bought a piece of land for a moderate price, of Dr. Charles L. Knowlton, on which the Town Hall now stands.

They at once began to look for a man to take charge of moving the building, and several contractors came and went away afraid to undertake so large a task. It was thought by some that the risk would be lessened by taking down the spire and moving it separately, but finally the job of moving the building entire was let to a Mr. Tubbs of Springfield for \$700, but they neglected to make out a written contract.

The Parish were to furnish 7 or 8 cords of blocking and the sticks to move it on. These consisted of four cross sticks 50 feet long (the width of the building) and 12 inches thick. These sticks were faced on two sides and are still in place. Also two sticks faced, 70 feet long by 12 inches thick, for shoes. One set of these sticks was bought of Sam<sup>l</sup> and Lot Bassett, and the other set of Jehiel Perkins. Mr. Perkins said that as it was a Christly calling he would give them, but afterwards he tried to get pay.

The contract with Mr. Tubbs was made about April 1st, but as it was a late spring that year the moving could not begin

until May 15. As the house was built facing the east it could be started straight ahead. It proved to be a much heavier building than Mr. Tubbs had supposed, and his apparatus broke several times and had to be replaced. At no time could it be moved without raising up the back end so that the whole house would pitch forward. The house was taken straight across the old road south of John Sears' barn and into the road again at the turn. As anyone can see, it would take a large amount of blocking here to get the house across the hollow, and the moving committee had to hustle around for more. Here Mr. Tubbs struck and said he would go no further with it unless the committee would furnish a team to move the blocking. This, they had not agreed to do but they finally bought a pair of oxen, Mr. Tubbs agreeing to furnish the driver. The oxen were kept in Mr. Moses Cook's pasture which then came to the road and included what is now Charles Bassett's mowing lot. In going down the hill it was found necessary to hitch on a big boat load of stone to keep it from going on too fast. When it had arrived at the place where it was to stand, the contractor was going to leave it on the blocking pitched down hill, and the committee had to give him \$80 more to put it on the foundation.

People now living who saw the moving think the building inclined three or four degrees from the perpendicular, and was very noticeable.

Rev. Willard Brigham was the minister at that time and did what he could to encourage the work by preaching many fervent sermons from texts like this, "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.'"

During the period of moving the meetings were held in the Ranney block in the old town hall.

The first town meeting before the incorporation of the town, as has been noted, was held at the house of Jonathan Sprague, who it is believed lived just west of the corner near Mr. Lanfair's house. The first meeting after its incorporation by the name of Ashfield was held at Joseph Mitchell's tavern on the east side of Bellows Hill and they were held there until the meetinghouse in what is now the cemetery on the Plain was partially finished in January, 1771. There was no fire in the building and it must have been a very uncomfortable place, but the meetings were held here for nearly fifty years. Occasionally, on the coldest days they adjourned to one of the village taverns, where they could obtain warmth for the outer and inner man.



Zachariah Field built the house now occupied by Mr. Alvah Howes in 1792 and in 1816 Mr. John Williams bought the premises and opened a store and tavern there. After the new meetinghouse was built on the hill in 1812, the town still continued to hold meetings in the old house down by the cemetery until, the building becoming dilapidated, they often adjourned to the tavern of John Williams, as this was a larger and more convenient building than any of the other hotels. When it was voted to sell the old meetinghouse in 1819 all the meetings were held with Mr. Williams but there were frequent votes taken on the question of building a town hall or of meeting in the new house on the hill. Mr. Williams, having a store and tavern, was naturally desirous of keeping the place of meeting near him, and as a new place of meeting was being considerably agitated, offered to furnish a room in his building on very liberal terms. As the public business of the town was transacted here for over forty years, and as some litigation arose as to its occupancy, we give a copy of the vote and lease entire dated January, 1820.

Voted to accept certain proposals of John Williams Jr. for furnishing an hall in which to do town business; and to hold the town meetings in said hall, which proposals were in the words following, that is to say, "Proposals by John Williams Jr. to furnish a hall for the use of the town of Ashfield. Said hall shall be situated at the east end of my dwelling house and connected with the same, shall be forty feet long and thirty-five feet wide with a fireplace furnished with wood when necessary, and free of all expense to the town; shall be for the use of military companies or any other public transactions of the town which shall require a large room.

Said hall shall be constructed agreeably to the wish of the town. There shall be a stoop erected along the south front of my dwelling house so that the inhabitants may go from any part of said house to the town hall under cover, said hall shall be kept in good repair for the use of the town during the life of the building. There shall also be furnished 130 feet of shed room for the accommodation of horses attached to the building.

This hall as built by Mr. Williams was entered through the middle door of the building, passing up the stairs and turning through a door to the right. At the foot of the stairs to the left



was the barroom and in the room adjoining to the west was the store. A piazza, as at present, ran through the whole length of the building. The hall occupied the whole of the second floor of the main building east of the middle door. Its walls were of the height only of an ordinary room, with windows on each side and none at the ends. A platform with a desk about ten feet long was at the east end of the room and a small fireplace which sometimes sent forth more smoke than heat was at the west end, also another fireplace at the right of the platform. Three rows of seats on each side extended the length of the building, the second row on a platform about six inches above the main floor, and the third row about six inches above that.

On cloudy days, at full meetings those in the back seats in front of the windows were requested to vacate their seats and stand at the end of the hall in order that the officers at the desk might obtain light to count votes and do the ordinary business.

The meetings occupied much more time than at present. The March meetings were adjourned, sometimes for one week, sometimes until April, it requiring two and sometimes three meetings to complete the business of the annual meeting. The officers were required to be elected by a majority vote, and several ballots were liable to be taken for each selectman before a choice could be made. The reports of the selectmen and school committee were not printed as now, but were read in open town meeting and votes taken on their acceptance. There was, of course, a good deal of discussion and some of the questions took a wide and sometimes an unparliamentary latitude consuming much time.

For some years the relations between Mr. Williams and the town in regard to the hall were pleasant, but from 1830-40 the temperance wave which had swept over the country did not fail to reach Ashfield. A strong temperance party was formed, the Whig and the Democrat parties were lost for a time, and it was Temperance and Anti-Temperance. The Temperance party gained steadily and in 1839 Mr. Williams put in a claim for pay for the use of the town hall. A committee chosen to investigate reported that in their opinion Mr. Williams had no legal claim

for pay, which report was accepted. The matter still being agitated, other committees were appointed, one of which reported in favor of paying for the hall which was also accepted, but soon after the vote was rescinded, the town still refusing to vote any recompense. In 1842, a vote was passed requesting the selectmen not to approbate any person to sell intoxicating liquors in town.

In April, 1848, Mr. Williams sued the town for \$5,000, alleging breach of contract on the town hall lease, claiming that as a keeper of a public house he had been promised the custom and patronage of the town which had not been given him, also claiming recompense for taxes paid on building, and so forth. The selectmen were chosen to manage the case, but it does not appear that anything was recovered, and the records do not show that anything was paid to subsequent owners of the premises for use of the hall.

It seems, however, that the town grew dissatisfied with the place for their meetings, frequent articles appearing in the warrant relative to building a new town house.

In 1853, a committee was chosen to confer with the trustees of the old Academy with regard to using that building in connection with a town house, but nothing definite was done about it.

In March, 1858, the meetinghouse on the hill having been moved down to the village, a committee was appointed to ascertain the expense of buying the basement of the house for a town hall, also to ascertain the expense of building a new town hall. This committee was also instructed to find out from Mr. H. S. Ranney, who now owned the John Williams property, how much he would give if the town would terminate the lease and vacate the premises. At an adjourned meeting the committee reported that Mr. Ranney declined to give anything, saying that he did not consider it his duty to pay the town for doing what it was for their interest to do. The committee also reported that the basement of the meetinghouse could be bought for \$500, and estimated the cost of fitting it up at \$434.30, making a total of \$934.30. They estimated the cost of a new hall fitted up 62 x 42 at \$1,699.80. The vote stood against buying

the basement, 142 to 134. The new parish people opposed buying the basement of the other parish. Party feeling ran high, so much so, that when the ringing of the bell for week days and tolling for deaths and funerals was auctioned off, Mr. Josephus Crafts bid six and one-fourth cents for the privilege of doing it with the 2nd parish bell. The next year, W. H. Elmer paid ten cents for a like privilege with the old bell.

In 1861, an article was again placed in the warrant to see if the town would buy the basement or build a new hall, but it was voted to pass over the article.

Nothing further appears to have been done until November, 1870, when the parishes and churches having united, it was voted to purchase the old meetinghouse for \$1,000.

It seems that there were some objections raised against this meeting on alleged technicalities, for December 3, another meeting was called when it was "Voted, that the town purchase the land and buildings formerly owned by the first parish, provided they will throw in the bell and the four stoves connected with the building." There was then much opposition, the vote was doubtful and the house being divided it was declared a vote, 94 in favor and 63 against. The offer was accepted by the parish and the deed of the parish made to the treasurer of the town of Ashfield.

The same year, the building was shingled and other repairs made, costing about \$300. In 1874, the selectmen's room and kitchen were partitioned off with other changes at a cost of \$340. In 1884, \$500 was expended on the upper hall. In 1894, the building was thoroughly painted and slated at a cost of over \$500. In 1897, lightning damaged the front of the building to the extent of \$115 which was paid by the insurance companies. To repair this and for other purposes \$250 was expended on the building. The next year the underpinning was made secure, the granite steps placed in front, and so forth, at a cost of about \$590. The expense of the safety vault for the preservation of record books, papers, and so forth, in 1902, was \$637. In 1905, the addition was made in the rear costing \$1,056. In 1907, the new floor and seats in the upper hall cost \$884, and in 1908, \$390

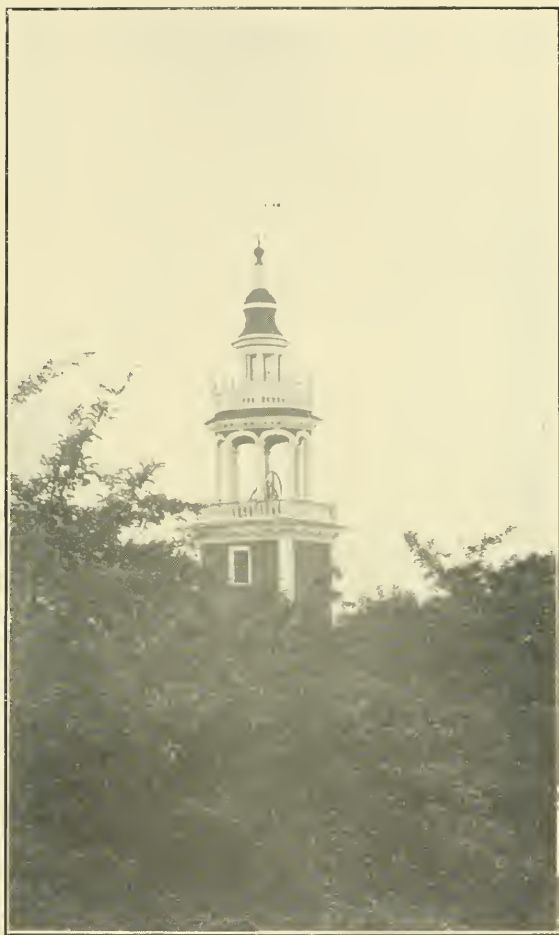
was spent in carrying out the state inspector's orders, and \$66 in painting and papering.

Although considerable money has been spent on the building, it would now seem that it has been well laid out. The hall, town officers' room, the law and document room, the large vault, the ladies' kitchen, with the spacious hall above, esteemed so highly as an audience room, also by those who "trip the light fantastic toe," all make it a building with which any town should be satisfied. Its exterior also, with its unique tower and steeple, said to have only one duplicate in the state, is admired by visitors. E. C. Gardner, Springfield's esteemed architect and a native of Ashfield, says, "I have always felt that the tower and steeple of the town hall was one of the finest examples of a very interesting class of New England architecture of which, unfortunately, the existing specimens are becoming fewer and fewer."

The church in Northboro, Mass., built by Colonel Ames four years before he built the church in Ashfield had a similar steeple. Colonel Ames evidently borrowed his design from the Sir Christopher Wren churches built over one hundred years before. That of our town hall is very much like some of the towers on St. Paul's Cathedral and of other churches in England designed by Wren before 1700.

A photograph of the Northboro church (now the Unitarian) shows that with a slight difference in the pillars around the bell deck, the exterior of the building is the same as ours. Rev. Mr. Kent, the historian of the Northboro church at its centennial in 1908, says of its builder:

Col. Ames or Eames was born in Marlboro, Mass., in 1767; he was a carpenter, cabinet maker and contractor. He built a church in Marlboro in 1805, in Northboro 1808, a steeple or church in Shrewsbury and several churches in the western part of the state.



TOWER AND STEEPLE OF ASHFIELD TOWN HALL





## CHAPTER XVI

### PROVISION FOR THE POOR

That "The poor ye have always with you," the frequent town votes respecting them testify. They were at first left in care of the selectmen by vote, then later a sum of money was annually raised for support of the poor. In the time of the Revolutionary war, and after the war, in the financial stress, the families of the soldiers and of those imprisoned for private debts or for non-payment of taxes were aided by the town. Later, unfortunate persons were provided for in various ways,—in many instances "boarded out."

In 1815, it was voted to raise \$100 for support of the poor. In 1818, several children were auctioned off to the lowest bidder, to be bound out until 21 years of age. Several years the poor were bid off at "public vendue" in open town meeting to the lowest bidder. In cases when it was thought they were abused, the selectmen were instructed to investigate.

In 1819, a special committee reported that the care of the poor had cost the town \$700 and recommended building a poor house 30 x 14 with a cellar and oven—this probably to supply the needy with bread as they might apply for it. It appears that such a structure was built. Different cases were disposed of in different ways. In 1813, it was "Voted, that the selectmen be authorized to put up a log hut on the town land formerly owned by Mr. Jenkins for Tim Warren to move on and oversee him and see that he gets a living for himself and family." This log hut was built in the northwest part of the town, south of where the T. P. Smith house was burned on the lot west of the road just down the hill from the end of the two rows of maples.

In 1837, the United States having acquired from the sale of public lands and from other sources a large surplus fund, and not having caught the present fever of immense ironclads, and great public improvements, decided to divide it among the different towns in the country, if they would accept it on the

condition that if it should be needed by the country again it should be paid back. Ashfield's share amounted to \$3,578.56 and it was accepted by the town under the conditions. Under a committee this sum was loaned out to individuals on interest, with two good signers as security, in sums varying from \$200 to \$500 each. The interest was voted for the use of the common schools.

In 1838, a committee was chosen to confer with other towns as to the best method of supporting the poor. In February, 1839, the committee reported in favor of taking the surplus revenue money and buying a farm on which to support the poor and that the Lyman Lilly farm of 115 acres with 36 acres adjoining, belonging to Theodore Leonard, be bought for that purpose. This was the place where Mr. Geo. Chapin now lives. The report of the committee was accepted and \$1,000 was appropriated by the town for the purchase of stock, tools, and so forth, and the paupers who were able were moved to the farm. There were thirteen inmates the first year and Mr. Alvan Cross was the first superintendent. Subsequent superintendents were Luther Severance, Lorenzo Wait, Willard Clark, Dwight Collins, Orrin Knowlton, Elijah Field, W. F. Guilford, Hart Hillman, W. A. Thompson, Frank Ward, George Dennison and Wallace Ward.

Alvan Cross occupied the place seven years and was considered a very capable and humane superintendent.

In 1874, the old town farm was sold and the present farm was bought for \$2,350, the old one selling for about the same. That year the selectmen reported that there were five inmates, and that the cost of support was a little above \$2 each per week. The present superintendent is Mr. Wallace Ward with only one pauper inmate.

Among the dependent children helped by the town was one Salmon Miller, born in 1787, who was "boarded out" when a child and finally "bound out" to John Mantor until he was 21 years old. After coming of age it is said he repaid the town the \$100 they had paid Mr. Mantor for his indenture, and afterwards being frugal and industrious he bought what is now the

Bird farm in South Ashfield, married, and settled upon it. He always remembered how the town of Ashfield had cared for him when a child and often feelingly alluded to it. He died in 1863 and his wife in 1877. They left their property by will to the town of Ashfield, the income to be used in aiding the poor of the town under the direction of the overseers of the poor. This sum is called the Miller fund, and is now in the hands of Mr. L. F. Gray, trustee, the income subject to orders from the overseers of the poor. It was originally between \$5,000 and \$6,000, but now amounts to about \$7,000. Mr. Charles A. Hall in an interesting paper on the fund and its donors read before the Grange, says:

If any one in Ashfield begins to be in want, through sickness or any other adversity, before his neighbors put their hands very deeply into their pockets to help him some one of them is likely to ask if he cannot have some help from the Miller fund—and this is certainly a wise thing to ask, for a great number of people within the last twenty-five years have received most timely and valuable help from this fund. Many a poor old woman or needy old man, many a struggling widow working to the utmost to support her children and finding the effort too great for her, many an overworked, discouraged man with sickness in his family, have had their troubles lessened and their burdens somewhat lightened by gifts from this beneficent source.

The Miller Fund is the gift of Salmon Miller and his wife. His will provided that at his wife's death, all his property except his lot in the burying ground should be sold and the proceeds of such sale be used and applied under the direction of the overseers of the poor for the town of Ashfield, for the comfort, benefit and assistance of any persons who are inhabitants of the town of Ashfield, and who may, in the judgment of the overseers of the poor, be in need of such assistance—trusting to the discretion of said overseers of the poor to apply said amounts in such sums, and at such times, and under such circumstances as will be likely to be most productive of present comfort and benefit to the recipients, and at the same time produce the most lasting benefits intended to be conferred by this bequest.

The idea that the people to be helped must be "worthy poor" comes from the will of Mrs. Miller made many years after Mr. Miller's death. The bounty of Salmon Miller falls like the gentle rain from heaven alike upon the just and the unjust. He

makes no inquiry as to the reasons of their need and offers no reproof for what may have been wrong or foolish in their lives. It is enough for him to know that they are suffering and in want, then they are to receive such sums and at such times, and under such circumstances as seem likely to be most productive of present and future comfort and benefit.

There are many people now living in Ashfield who remember Mr. Miller towards the end of his life. He is said to have been a man slightly under the medium height, spare and thin, and towards the last part of his life quite stooping. He had keen eyes, overhung by bushy eyebrows and he habitually kept one eye closed. Claiming to be a Quaker, he always wore a broad-brimmed hat, he dressed carelessly in butternut colored clothing with heavy cowhide shoes, and he walked without haste, putting his feet down with great precision and evenness. I cannot learn that he ever went to attend Quaker meetings, but when, as sometimes happened he went to church at the Universalist Church in South Ashfield, he kept his hat on through the services. He observed the seventh day as the Sabbath, and worked on Sunday or first day as he always called it. Sometimes on Sunday he took his saw and went and worked on the woodpile of a poor widow or a sick neighbor. He did not like ministers and had a good deal to say about people who were priest ridden.

One Sunday he was fishing in the Chapel Falls brook. It was when the chapel was used for holding services and he got along to the chapel with his string of fish just as the services were about closing. The preacher was a shouting Methodist and when some of the brethren took occasion to reprove Mr. Miller for fishing there at such a time he said he would not do it again for the preacher made such a noise he scared the fish.

He was a very industrious man, thrifty and very saving but honest and upright and a very good neighbor. Mr. Joshua Knowlton says that soon after he was born his mother (Mrs. Knowlton) was very sick with a fever and Mr. Miller's folks took him and kept him till he was six months old.

It is a great pleasure to think of these good people—pleasant, good natured, neighborly folks—who had themselves felt the pinch of poverty—working early and late, saving and denying themselves to lay up money, and then freely sharing their hard earned savings with their neighbors who needed help.

“The threshold of their door  
Was worn by the poor  
Who thither came and freely got  
Kind words and meat.”

Without children of their own, they cared for other people's children and, dying, made provision that the good work should be carried on with the money which their hard work and self denial had slowly accumulated, and which shall be paid out in such sums and at such times and under such circumstances as seem likely to be most productive of present comfort and benefit to the recipient, and at the same time produce the most lasting benefit.

Dr. Shepard speaks of intemperance and the common use of liquor, in his sketch. In an old assessor's book giving a kind of agricultural census for the year 1821, one of the questions asked is, "How many barrels of cider can be made from your orchard?" as though this were an important product. The answers ranged from three to sixty. Dr. Shepard also speaks of the large number of distilleries in town where it was so easy for the farmers to get their cider made into brandy. The stores sold different kinds of spirits very freely. In 1793, Selah Norton, whose store was on the corner in the house now occupied by Mrs. Rosa Ranney, advertises in the *Hampshire Gazette*, "all sorts of dry goods, also old Jamaica spirits, N. E. Rum, French Brandy, &c. Will pay 8 pence a lb. for butter."

In an old account book kept at one of the village stores from 1815 to 1819, rum seems to have been sold to a large share of the people of the town in quantities from one pint to three gallons, almost as freely as molasses and other commodities. Prices were sometimes as low as  $12\frac{1}{2}$ c. per pint or \$1.00 per gallon. It was also evidently sold by the glass over the counter, as there are charges for 1 glass of spirits 6c., 1 of grog 5c., and sling at from  $12\frac{1}{2}$ c. to 17c. per mug. On one page is an account for July, 1819, with one of the habitues of the village who lived near. He is charged with "a half pint of Rum 5c., 1 Blue Devil 4c., 1 Morning Devil 6c., 1 qt. Rum 6c.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Devil 4c.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of Rum and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. Sugar 17c.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of Rum or Big N. Devil 8c., 5 lbs. of Flower 30c.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Devil 4c., 3 gills of Bitters  $12\frac{1}{2}$ c., 2 oz. Tea 16c., 1 Demi Devil 4c., 1 mug 10c., 1 Double Devil sweetened 10c., &c." There was credit in the month for Cash 50c. and three fourpences.



In 1826, a Temperance Society was started in Boston and the reform gradually spread over the state. Dr. Shepard evidently started the first temperance society here, as the constitution in his handwriting with the signatures of those joining was preserved among his papers and has been kindly furnished for us by his daughter. We deem it of sufficient importance to copy a part of the paper with the signatures.

#### CONSTITUTION

Art. 1. This Society shall be called the "Ashfield Temperance Society," auxiliary to the American Temperance Society.

Art. 2. Any person subscribing to this constitution shall become a member of this Society and continue so until he shall signify his desire to withdraw, to the Secretary.

Art. 3. The members of this Society, believing that the use of distilled spirits is, for persons in health, not only unnecessary but hurtful; that it is the cause of forming intemperate habits & appetites, and that while it is continued the evils of intemperance can never be prevented; therefore do agree that we will abstain from the use of ardent spirits except as medicine in case of bodily infirmity, and that we will not allow the use of them in our families, nor provide them for the entertainment of our friends, or for persons in our employment, and that in all suitable ways we will discountenance the use of them in the community.

#### Signatures,

Thomas Shepard	Joseph Fuller
Chipman Smith	Lyman Cross
Nehemiah Hathaway	Heman S. Day
Asa Sanderson	Enos Smith
Barnabas Howes	Jared Bement
James McFarland	Lyman Wood
Daniel Forbes	Joshua Welden
Elisha Wing	Reuben Bement
Joseph Vincent	Ebenezer Forbes
Thomas White	Ezra Williams, 2nd
Atherton Clark	Thaddeus Rude
Elijah Paine	Elias Gray

The movement gradually spread through the town. There was, of course, opposition and in a short time the citizens were arrayed against each other in two strong parties, temperance



and anti-temperance, each having its own candidates for office. It was a great struggle for those who all their lives had been accustomed to the use of ardent spirits to give it up, but it was generally done.

An old, liberally minded man who died a few years since used to say, "I made up my mind that on the whole it was a good thing and I told the help, 'By George, boys, there's something in this temperance business and we've got to get along without the liquor in haying this year, not even for baiting' and we've never had it since."\*

At the annual meeting in 1842 the town voted "Not to approve any person to sell ardent spirits."

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\*Roswell Lesure.



## CHAPTER XVII

### ASHFIELD CENTENNIAL, 1865\*

The celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Incorporation of Ashfield, occurred on Wednesday, the 21st. For two or three months past, preparations had been making for the event and for the last two or three weeks the absent sons and daughters of Ashfield had been coming from every part of the Union and the Canadas, to be present at the home gathering of her children. The day was all that could be wished and was ushered in by the firing of cannon and the ringing of bells. At the east end of the Plain, upon which the village is situated, an arch of evergreens and flowers was suspended over the road, upon the front side of which was "Sons and Daughters of Ashfield, Welcome Home," and on the reverse side, "Our Country Free; Ashfield Centennial; The Greatest Year of the Age, 1865." "In God we trust." At the west end of the Plain another arch of evergreens and flowers was also erected over the road upon which was the invitation—"Welcome Home Sons and Daughters of Ashfield," and on the reverse side, "June 21, 1765; June 21, 1865; The year of Jubilee has come; One hundred years old to-day." The star spangled banner floated from a liberty pole and also across the street from Nelson Gardner's to A. E. Brunson's house. From early morning, the people from the neighboring towns commenced flocking in, until there must have been at 10 o'clock, from 3,000 to 4,000 persons present. At 9 o'clock, O. P. Payne's six horse team, each horse wearing upon his head a beautiful red plume, and the omnibus which they drew, containing the Shelburne Falls Brass Band, discoursing beautiful music and followed by a string of carriages half a mile in length, arrived from Shelburne Falls and Buckland.

John Sprague acted as Marshal of the day, assisted by Chauncey Bryant, Addison G. Hall, Charles Howes, Edward P. Eldridge, Alvan Hall, Jr., and Murray Guilford. About 9 o'clock,

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\*Report of *Greenfield Gazette*.

a procession was formed by them, consisting of nine carriages of old style and their occupants dressed in ancient costume. In one carriage the occupants were busy at the good old occupation of dressing and spinning flax, and upon one old nag were seated a man, wife and child. A car followed, containing thirty-six young ladies dressed in white, wearing red and blue sashes and crowns of evergreens, with a white flag in their hands, representing every State of the Union, with a lady in the center of the group dressed in red, white and blue, carrying the flag of the Union, representing Liberty. Following the car was a wagon with two negroes, one manacled and labeled "Liberty, 1765" and the other erect and free, labeled "Liberty, 1865." An old revolutionary hero limped along by their side. After the passage of this procession through the street twice, escorted by the band, a procession was formed about half past ten and proceeded to a beautiful grove on land of Alvin Sanderson's, a few rods north of the west end of the Plain, where a speaker's stand had been erected facing a side hill, which was soon covered with people. At the grove, the audience was called to order by the Marshal and an original hymn sung by the choir under the charge of L. C. Sanderson.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Dr. Thomas Shepard of Bristol, R. I., a former minister of Ashfield. Hon. Henry L. Dawes was then announced as President of the day and delivered the following address:

MR. DAWES' ADDRESS\*

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS—In discharging the duty that devolves upon me to-day, little else will be expected of me than the announcement from time to time, of what has been more fittingly assigned to others. There can be no need of a single word from me to insure your undivided attention to what the occasion shall prompt them to say, for it furnishes its own theme, and its spirit must quicken the mind of every son and daughter

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\*Mr. Dawes was a native of Cummington, taught the Sanderson Academy in 1841, in 1844 married one of his pupils—a daughter of Chester Sanderson, Esq., who lived where Clayton Eldredge now does. He was elected Representative to Congress in 1857, and was U. S. Senator from 1875 to 1893.

of Ashfield, coming up hither from far or near, to participate in the celebration of this anniversary. None of us has sprung from the ground. Each one of us is bound to this spot by some special bond—some golden chain which grows stronger and brighter as it is lengthened and worn by the passing years. By it each one is drawn back to this beautiful vale to-day—or, what is better, has always been kept within the healthful influences which here abound. Along its glittering links, as we count them backwards, are flashing bright reminiscences and tender memories.

I am charged by the authorities of this town, and by the good people who have here kept the hearth-stone warm in winter, and the groves and lawns fresh and green in summer, gladdening the heart and cheering the eye of every returning wanderer—to welcome back to the old family mansion and homestead, all the children, young and old, who have come up to rejoice with them to-day, in the festivities with which they celebrate this, the one hundredth birthday, of the good old town of their nativity. In their name I welcome you all back to these green hills, which seem to me, to-day, to be bigger than ever, to these babbling brooks, singing on and singing ever, and in their ceaseless music, mocking the fading race of men—to this beautiful lake, as full and overflowing as the bowl of plenty. I welcome you back to the hospitable family board, laden with the “fatted calf” and fullness of the land. More than all, I welcome you back to the homes and hearts of this people, larger than the hills around them, fuller than the streams that glide so merrily at their feet. Here you will greet the welcome face and shake the cordial hand of many an old friend, but you will all the while be missing those of others. And as you visit places of interest, you will not forget the churchyard. It is larger and fuller than when you left, and there will be answered many an inquiry, made as you pass among the scenes of this day. You will rejoice with filial pride, in all that beautifies and adorns your native town. And although an hundred years old, look at her and see how young and beautiful she is this morning, coming forth to meet her numerous and happy children. And how elegantly she has draped herself for her birthday. I think we will all agree with the maid in the spelling book that “green becomes her complexion best.” You will rejoice too in her fair fame at home and abroad—in the goodly name her sons have built up for themselves and her, in almost every State in the Union, and have carried to other lands. You will exult with those at home in what she has accomplished in every good work and enterprise. Remember also that she

has borne the full share of the burdens brought upon the land, in the great struggle for the nation's life, now triumphantly terminated. Forget not the sacrifices she has offered up for the Union. Bear in mind that all her young men are not here to-day. Into the garland of joy you place upon her brow to-day, weave the cypress in remembrance of those noble young men she has offered up upon the altar of her Country, and pass uncovered by the soldier's grave.

Lastly, thank God, that in the midst of war, with its desolation and carnage, this vale has remained in undisturbed repose, and that the peace which now everywhere crowns the arms of the Republic, and perches upon the golden folds of her starry banner, wherever it floats, has ever rested like angels' wings over the home of your fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, here in this, your native town.

Rev. Dr. Wm. P. Payne of Holden, a native of Ashfield, then delivered an Historical Address, which we hope to be able to publish. It was long and able. He said the first permanent settlement was made in 1741, by Richard Ellis, a smart, friendless Irish boy. This place was first called Huntstown, in honor of Capt. Ephraim Hunt of Weymouth, to whom and company some of the land was given by the State for their military services. Its present name—changed at the date of incorporation—was probably suggested by the ash trees that thrive naturally here. The place curiously rises and falls in population. In 1761, there were nineteen families; In 1774 there were only twelve. In 1820, it had its largest population, near 1,800; now it is estimated at 1,300. Not less than five religious denominations have flourished here. At present, two Congregational and one Episcopal service are fully maintained. Once everybody went to church, and there was no respectability in staying at home. Now things have changed. The educational privileges of Ashfield have generally been good. Here Mary Lyon, of Mt. Holyoke seminary fame, attended school, and just over the Ashfield line, in the town of Buckland, she was born. Here, too, Alvan Clark, the great telescopic inventor, received his early impressions, Twenty-five ministers of the gospel can claim Ashfield as a birthplace—more than any other town in Franklin county—eight physicians, seven lawyers, thirteen ministers'



wives, seven doctors' wives, one lawyer's wife, and one member of Congress. Thirty of the citizens have received a college education. This place was once noted for its distillation of essences, and is still for the manufacture of wooden wares. The first machine for planing boards on both sides at once, originated here.

At the close of the address there was music by the band, after which Rev. John Alden of Providence, R. I., another native, delivered a poem.

This closed the exercises at the grove and the procession formed and under escort of the band, marched to a large tent south of the east end of the Plain, where dinner was provided for six hundred, and all of the places were occupied. Divine blessing was invoked by Rev. Francis Williams of Connecticut. After the appetite was satisfied, Mr. Dawes, acting as toast-master, gave the following:

*The sacred memory of our Fathers.*

Responded to by the Band, with "Yankee Doodle."

*The town of Ashfield*—The only town of the name in the world. May she continue to raise ministers, and send messengers of peace and call-Porters to all parts of the earth.

Responded to by Rev. Chas. S. Porter of Boston. His was an eloquent, political, religious address of about half an hour, and was delivered with manly spirit and grace. His theme was "The value of a man," and he showed by allusions both to America's greatest and meanest men, how usefulness depended on moral worth, and how what a man will do depends on what he is. He said that personal Christianity was the surest guaranty of national preservation, and that unless religion and education were cherished, the next centennial would find us in the blackness of darkness. The war of the races, the Protestant with the papal, was predicted, and Lafayette quoted as saying to Washington that if ever our government was overthrown it would be by the papacy. He complimented Mary Lyon and Alvan Clarke, the former the founder of Mount Holyoke Seminary, and the

latter the greatest telescope maker in the world, as local products, and said it was enough for a town to produce either in a century.

*The duties of patriotism paramount to those of party.*

Responded to by Hon. Whiting Griswold of Greenfield.

*The churches of Ashfield*—Their flocks hail with pleasure the return of their first Shepherd.

Responded to by Rev. Dr. Shepard of Bristol, the fourth pastor of Ashfield. He stated that the greater part of his old flock was in the graveyard. His reminiscences of the time he was pastor were very interesting.

A letter was then read from Alvan Clarke, regretting his inability to be present.

The following Hymn by a native of Ashfield, was then sung:

#### HYMN

Jehovah, Lord! Our Father's God,  
Adored be thy grace  
That 'mid these hills and mountains strong  
Gave us our dwelling place.

'Mid Summer's heat and Winter's cold  
An endless round of toil,  
Fathers and sons have passed their years,  
Blest tillers of the soil.

Peace reigned, and plenteous harvests waved,  
And learning's page shone bright;  
Religion, too, her solace gave  
In sorrow's troubled night.

And when war brayed to war, we stood,  
To God and Country true;  
Our native breath is Freedom's air;  
All men should breathe it too.

Both despot and the slave alike  
These mountain heights disown;  
All must be free and loyal too,  
These templed hills among.

Witness, ye Heavens! Thou rolling sun!  
To God and Liberty!  
We consecrate these mountain homes,  
This birth-place of the Free.

May coming centuries forswear  
Both Slavery and the Sword,  
And all earth's swarming millions be  
The Freemen of the Lord.

*The oldest inhabitant*—Her life is the only bridge left standing which spans the entire century.

Referring to Mrs. Eunice Forbes, who is 102 years, 9 months and 6 days of age. Three cheers were given with a will for the oldest inhabitant.

*The Ashfield Smiths*—A long ancestral line—Preserved on the ocean—Preserved in history—may the intelligence and moral worth of their characters be Preserved as a lesson for this and future generations.

Responded to by Dr. A. P. Phillips of Chautauqua County, New York, a descendant of them.

*Our Representative in Congress*—Faithful to his constituents, alike in State and National councils.

Hon. Wm. B. Washburn of this town, responded to the above in a very happy manner, speaking chiefly upon the events of the past few years, and the duties of the hour.

*Our Soldiers*—Crowns and honors belong to the gallant defenders of our country's flag. And for those martyred heroes who have gone down through the valley and the shadow of death from the pest prisons of the South, their names and memories shall be held sacred and enshrined in the hearts of a free and grateful people.

Responded to by a patriotic song, "Tramp, Tramp," from the Simpson Brothers, Mrs. John B. Simpson, who is 81 years old, being with her whole family, five sons and two daughters, present. They had come home from Mississippi, New York, Wisconsin and Canada to be present at the celebration and met for the second time in thirty-three years.

The following poem by Mrs. Geo. C. Goodwin, was then read by Mr. Goodwin:

#### POEM

One hundred years ago, our hills  
Clad in their June day dress  
Smiled as if conscious of their own  
Exceeding loveliness;  
And brooks and rills leaped from the shade  
To meet the sun's caress.

With sturdy blows the woodman's axe  
The slumbering echoes woke,  
And robins twittering to their mates,  
The dawn's gray stillness broke,  
While to the trees the whispering winds  
Their tender secrets spoke.

The wild rose and the fragrant fern  
Perfumed the summer air,  
And lent their wealth of bloom to crown  
The blushing maiden's hair,  
Who listened 'neath the sheltering trees  
To her fond lover's prayer.

Sweet children's voices rippled then  
In careless, gushing mirth,  
And spring-like faces shed their light  
Around the humble hearth;  
While strong men lived and women loved  
As since the fair world's birth.

To-day the earth is just as fair  
As in that far-off June;  
The summer mornings fly as swift  
To meet the year's bright noon,  
And trees and birds and childish tongues  
Blend in as sweet a tune.

But where are those who lived and loved  
One hundred years ago,  
Who wrought with patient hands that we  
Might only plenty know?  
In nameless and forgotten graves  
Their bones are lying low.

Their names are lost, yet their fair deeds  
Live in the hearts of men,  
And on our history's proudest page  
Are writ with diamond pen;  
And still their foot-prints may be seen  
On meadow, hill and glen.

To break the harsh oppressor's chains,  
Those brave men fought and died;  
Their blood has mingled with our soil  
And stained our water's tide,  
And with our country's bravest sons  
They slumber side by side.

Our fathers toiled and fought to make  
A home for freemen brave;  
Our sons have given their precious lives  
That freemen's home to save,  
That o'er a land baptized in blood,  
Our honored flag may wave.

They left for us a heritage  
 Better than gold or lands;  
 The memory of their faith and prayers  
 The century's drifting sands  
 Have not effaced; their incense still  
 Strengthens our hearts and hands.

Long may our homes a shelter be  
 For those who love the right;  
 Long may the white-robed angel, Peace,  
 Bathe them in purest light;  
 And nevermore may war's foul breath  
 Sweep o'er them with its blight.

All honor to the strong and true,  
 Who from their labors rest,  
 Whose brows now wear the victor's crowns,  
 With those whom Christ has blessed;  
 Long may our children keep their faith,  
 An honored, rich bequest.

*The Poet of the day.*

Response by Rev. John Alden.

*The Orator of the day*—We congratulate ourselves that we have been to the Paines to secure a Paines-worthy address for this occasion.

Response by Dr. W. P. Paine.

*The Christian philanthropists in the Army of our Union*—Their name was legion, yet we gave them one Moor.

Responded to by Rev. J. F. Moors of Greenfield, in his usual happy and ready manner.

*The delegation from the West*—We welcome you here on this historic ground, alike sacred and dear to us all; and may your long journey be a type of the fraternal feelings which shall always exist between us.

Response by Sidney Smith of Greenfield, who is always ready and appropriate in his remarks.

*Ashfield, her best productions.*

Response by Rev. Francis Williams of Connecticut.

*The memory of the late Hon. Elijah Paine.*

Response by Rev. John C. Paine.

Letters were read from Gov. Andrew, Alvan Clarke, and Hon. Francis Gillet, and the following parting hymn, by a native of Ashfield, sung:

## PARTING HYMN

And now we are to sever,  
We'll sing a song of praise;  
We meet again, no, never,  
In this our native place.  
Sweet, sweet has been our meeting,  
Our farewells are not sad;  
This day preserved in Mem'ry  
Shall help to make life glad.

We'll take again our armor,  
Rush to the thickest fight,  
Stand firm each by the other,  
Heaven's Palms and Crown's in sight.  
And then put off the mortal,  
Conquerors thro' Him who died,  
And meet again 'yond Jordan  
With all Heaven's glorified.

A tear for those who've fallen,  
And gone before to rest;  
They've fought life's battle bravely,  
*Equalled in all the best.*  
We, we who have outlived them,  
Will keep their mem'ries bright,  
Prolong their bold endeavor  
To re-enthroned the Right.

Dissolve this vast assembly,  
Seek each his home again;  
Peace go with every exile,  
God keep all who remain.  
And for the sake of Jesus,  
Whose praise Creation fills,  
Oh! God of Israel bless  
Old *Huntstown* on the hills.

There were fireworks in the evening, and everything passed off in a very satisfactory manner, with the exception of a little confusion at the entrance to the dinner table.

Among the natives or former residents present, were Rev. Dr. Thomas Shepard of Bristol, R. I., Rev. John Alden of Providence, R. I., Rev. Dr. W. P. Paine, Rev. John C. Paine, Rev. C. S. Porter, Wells Porter, Esq., of Cleveland, Ohio, Attorney-at-Law, Rev. Francis Williams of Connecticut, Rev.



Willard Brigham, Hon. H. L. Dawes, and Levi Cook, Esq., of Pittsfield, Chas. Baldwin and Augustus Knowlton of New York, Aaron Fuller, Edmund Bement, A. F. Ranney, J. H. Bassett, and Dr. H. B. Phillips of Central and Western New York, Nathan Loomis, Esq., of West Springfield, Alonzo Lilly and George C. Goodwin, Esqs., of Boston, Dr. Elbridge Simpson, and Joel T. Simpson, Esq., of Hudson, N. Y., Dr. F. Henry Simpson of Poughkeepsie, Frederic Simpson of Wisconsin, and Albert Simpson of Columbus, Miss. We also noticed Maj. Sylvester Smith of Hadley, General Howland of Conway, Judge Grennell of Greenfield, and other aged gentlemen.

Before the dinner hour several of the 34th boys arrived home and were received with cheers.

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We give a few extracts from Rev. Dr. Wm. P. Paine's most excellent address. The strictly historical portions are omitted as they are given in Dr. Shepard's sketch, and in different parts of this book.

Natives, citizens, and former residents of good old Ashfield, we salute you; and more, also, we cordially greet those who, like yourself, Mr. President, are *half* natives, especially if it be their better half.

First of all, let us devoutly and gratefully recognize a beneficent Providence in the occasion which has brought us together. Some of us have been looking forward with lively interest for these many years to this day, and now by a merciful and watchful Providence we are permitted to enjoy the fervent desire of our throbbing hearts. But not all are here who once hoped to be, and whom we once hoped to meet, for before the century came to a close, they fell by the way. But, ye departed ones, ye are not forgotten to-day. We miss you, we hallow your memories. The departure of some of you excites the tenderest emotions of sympathizing and bleeding hearts. Concerning you the secret language of many of this multitude now is, "O if the deceased parent, the child, the husband, the wife, the brother, the sister, might have mingled with us in the social festivities of this day, what a sable cloud now hanging over the spirits would have been without form, and what a delightful charm would have been added to the occasion!" And ye reverend fathers, also, who lived and served in former generations, and who had no more expectation of meeting your children here

to-day, than we now have of meeting ours at the expiration of another one hundred years—be assured that you are not forgotten, but are tenderly, honorably remembered. It is due you, that in these festivities you have a very large place in our memories, and hearts, and words. We discern your footsteps all about us. Your plastic hands are visible on memorials of former years, which everywhere now attract special attention. You laid good foundations for our pleasant superstructures; you sowed precious seed, whose fruits your children have garnered up. This day is more hallowed on account of the past than of the present—of the dead than of the living.

While those honored sires who with a spirit so noble and self-sacrificing, bore the burden and heat of the day, are resting in silence, let us, who still are in the midst of the activities of a fleeting life, be careful to lay as good foundations, and leave as rich an inheritance to our successors, as our honored fathers have left for us.

A centennial celebration is a great occasion—great in memories, great in instruction, great in pleasure, and it furnishes a store-house of great things to be remembered and rehearsed in years to come. Often will the children of this assembly speak, when they are old, to children who shall succeed them, of things said and done and felt this day. No individual enjoys but one such day. If an exception here and there could be found, it is so rare that it need not be taken into account. Comparatively few indeed are blest with a participation in the festivities of a single such memorial occasion. Through a beneficent Providence, we are of the happy few; and we who are gathered here from our dispersions, are of one heart and one mind. We will be to-day at least, a band of loving brothers. If there has ever been, by misunderstanding or wrong, a feeling of alienation, it must now cease, or for one day at least be suspended. If there has ever, perchance, been a discordant string, the harps must now be attuned to the sweetest melody, for we *are* a band of brothers, and we will have the pleasure of esteeming and being esteemed, of loving and being loved.

Many of us have come home, and we wish now to tell our experience while absent from the place of our nativity and childhood. We did not go away because we did not love our homes and neighbors, and hills, and streams, and lakes and walks. All these were very dear, nevertheless we soon learned that we had underprized them. And as we have wandered about, and made new observations, and especially as we have grown a little

older and harder to be pleased, we have been increasingly impressed that our good old native town, where we early slept and waked, babbled and frisked, and sat around the liberal old-fashioned fire-place, (what an institution that! shame on the little modern inventions to keep one warm) and heard then and there wonderful stories of wonderful things, and in childish innocence went to school and to church, this town, we say, is the finest on the face of the earth to make one feel free and easy and happy, for we have never felt since as before. We say without reserve that we have never found another place that has begun to do what this did to drive dull care away and paint bright visions of the future. In no other place have the skies appeared so bright, nor the sun so luminous, nor the moon so silvery, nor the stars so vocal, nor the hills so enchanting, nor a walk by the rippling brooks so much like a talk with those we love; no other groves have been filled with such music, no other birds have been clad with such beautiful plumage, and have sung so sweetly, no other friends have been so nearly perfect, and so warmly loved and so steadfastly remembered, and no other joys have been half so gushing and unmingled. This is the impression with which we live over the days and scenes of our early years in this beloved and never to be forgotten place, and under which we now have come home. Whosoever speaks evil of this dear spot, may know that he shall meet the withering protest of those jealous and ever fresh experiences of our childhood. The richest blessings ever rest upon thee, our dear and hallowed native town.

In performing the duty, on this first centennial celebration of the town, which I have the honor to have had assigned to me, I shall attempt to give something like a semi-historical address. Though the occasion permits but little detail of the annals of the century, it ought not to pass without as much reference as time will consistently furnish, to the condition and deeds of those to whose special instrumentality the town is indebted for its growth and prosperity. It is particularly pertinent that the earliest historical incidents of the place should be honored in our review. While there are some important things connected with the settlement of the town and the first years of its history, which are either entirely unknown or the authenticity of which is too vague and doubtful to constitute items of reliable history, yet in relation to the earliest years of the place, to its very beginning, there is much that is novel and pleasing, and instructive, over which time has cast no veil, and from which the clearest records remove every doubt. Instead of referring, as I

pass along, to sources from which incidents and information have been gathered, I will here state that I am indebted chiefly, for the items presented, to the Proprietors' records and those of the town, and to a valuable manuscript prepared with much labor by Rev. Thomas Shepard, D.D., of Bristol, R. I., and formerly pastor of the Congregational church in this place. Your town clerk, Henry S. Ranney, Esq., by his studious and able attention to the past history of the place, has been of essential assistance. In this connection, I beg leave to say that in my judgment, the time has come when a history of the town should be prepared and published. Without further delay, let the fragments be gathered up, that nothing be lost.

Of the old meetinghouse which stood in what is now the cemetery on the Plain, he says:

It was used as a place of worship about forty-three years, till the year 1814. A few of us have very vivid recollections of the old structure. We associate with it very venerable and peculiar reminiscences. In making choice of the location there seemed to be a plan to make the structure inspire awe and fear, for it had a grave-yard on one side, a dense woods on two sides and the front peered out as if to keep a kind of grim watch over the transactions of men and especially the guilty. When turbulent children were told that if they did not mend their ways they would be shut up in the meeting house, it was quite enough. No one held out any longer in his perverseness. The idea of those days seemed to be that there was something too airy and fanciful in paint for the sanctuary of the Lord, so they were careful that nothing but nature's hue should adorn the house, either within or without. That the Sabbath day might not be disturbed by noise, no bell was used to gather together the assembly, and that there might be no temptation for those less sedate to ask for a bell, care was taken that no place should be provided for it to play in. Lest some of somniferous temperament might be disposed to adjust themselves for a nap during service, (which was usually little short of two hours long) the most skillful men in devising uncomfortable pens and seats seemed to have been employed in building the house, and to have had most admirable success, and as if to teach the worshippers that the privileges of sanctuary service were worth a large amount of self-denial and suffering, not only was all artificial heat carefully excluded from the good old house in winter, but large crevices were kept open on the north and west sides

during the rigor of the season. That the boys might be taught to preserve a suitable degree of patience and quietness during the protracted services, when their bodies were half congealed, good and faithful tithing men, with stentorian voices and long poles, were stationed at convenient distances to preserve order, and it was no uncommon occurrence for the pulpit exercises to be suspended, while these grave officials walked their beat and put a squad of restless boys to rights. That the house might not be "daubed with untempered mortar," it was as destitute of plastering as of paint, and so it was ceiled from floor to roof, and overhead as underfoot, and boards of such dimensions! A boy would estimate them from four to six feet wide. Why, it would seem that it would require fully half a dozen trees, such as these forest trees now produce to make one such board. There are some here, I doubt not, who are now calling to mind some personal experiences in purloining and appropriating to various uses this remarkable lumber, after the house ceased to be occupied as a place of worship, if not a little before, for it stood several years in a dilapidated state, disappearing by piecemeals, as each one had need. The octagonal and elaborately wrought sounding board was a marked feature of the house, doubtless occupying more of the thoughts of the curious, as to the fastenings and why it did not fall onto the minister's head, than did the sermon or any part of the service. But yet those days were not to be despised. They were fully as bright and halcyon as any that have succeeded. Every one was constant at church. There was no respectability in absenting one's self from meeting, or in any way desecrating the Sabbath. If one was seen passing, except in going to or from church, it almost certainly indicated sickness at home and that a messenger was bound for the doctor.

In this connection the name and labors of Rev. Alvan Sanderson should again be honorably introduced. He was an ardent friend of the young, and was unwearied in his efforts to give them facilities for instruction. While yet actively engaged in pastoral services, which he did not suffer to be light, he was accustomed to gather the youth together for the purpose of teaching them personally, the rudiments of education. In some sections of the town he appointed evening schools for this purpose. The result was quite manifest in increasing desire and enthusiasm to obtain an extended education. When his labors ceased, by reason of his consumptive tendency, he put in operation, means, using his own funds chiefly, to establish an Academy in this place. He purchased a building on the hill near where the meeting house then stood, removed it to its



present site, put it into a convenient form, (convenient for those days) and opened a grammar and classical school in the spring of 1816. Here the youth of the place at a mere nominal expense, might receive a good business education, and one preparatory. Many residents of this, and other towns, in the early and palmy days of the Institution, availed themselves of its privileges, and a speedy change in good order, intelligence and intellectual aspirations, was marked. Many were prepared for college who have served in the various professions, and in business with honor and success. The good influence of this enterprise has been quite manifest in the history of the town for the last half century. The Institution was incorporated in 1821, by the name of "Sanderson's Academy." The founder left a fund, which was increased by private subscription, and for some years the Institution had a glorious career, being through the whole year in successful operation. It now has many sons and daughters ready to rise up and do it homage. We must not omit to mention that this is the place and the Academy where Mary Lyon received her first educational impressions and impulses. It was here that she first began to feel that there was a possibility of making her influence felt beyond the precincts of home. This fact she often subsequently affirmed. It is an honor of which any place should be proud, of giving form and influence to such a mind.

In 1815, a social circulating Library was gathered, and from time to time valuable additions were made till it became an important auxiliary in diffusing knowledge and culture. Also during the years when the Academy flourished, there was in existence a highly efficient Lyceum, in which much power and eloquence were displayed in debates. While the good effects of educational influences have been diffused through this entire community some of the more public results may be stated as follows: About thirty of the residents of this town have received a college education, twenty-five have entered the ministry, eight have become physicians, seven lawyers, one has achieved a world-wide reputation in mathematical and astronomical science. Moreover thirteen have become ministers' wives, seven wives of physicians, one the wife of a lawyer, and last but not least, Mr. President, one the wife of an honored member of Congress.

And in respect to the female portion of the above, I will venture to advertise for the advantage of whom it may concern. In the language of those who traffic in remarkable wares, there are a few more of the same sort, which may be had if application be soon made.



We now come where we, as our fathers, stop as it were, and stand still waiting for time to complete another century, that we may then be viewed as we now are. The records may tell that we were, and what we were. Whether the people will then come together from their dispersion by steam or wind or lightning, who can tell? Whether the habitations of man will be confined to the earth or whether they will have colonized the moon and stars, who will venture confidently to predict? Whether one's very labors will be limited to his own town or state, or whether men and women will go out for an evening call on some friend in New Orleans or London, who dares affirm? Who has the boldness even to conjecture what a century may bring forth? But amid the uncertainties of that distant day, of this we are morally sure, that not one of us shall be here to speak or hear, or observe; yet we cannot but feel a thrilling interest in what shall succeed our brief life in respect to the affairs of this our dear native town; and especially the influences which may follow our words and deeds and example.

The place of one's nativity has earnest claims on his service and good will. The spot of earth that furnishes one a place to commence his being has a right to look, as the very least, for a tribute of respect and affection. What right have I to fix a stigma of reproach on the place where I was born, by immoral habits and a sullied reputation? The same right, and no other, that one has to dishonor his parentage by an impure life. Who would not walk his own native streets and return to the scenes of his childhood in the sweet consciousness of a sterling integrity of life and heart? Who would not feel that his course of development and service is such that his native place may well be proud to regard him with favor. Be more just to your education and your interests, than by a faulty life to bring reproach on the mother who bore you or the place that first gave you breath. Nor whether residing here or elsewhere, suffer yourself, as the manner of some is, to be heard speaking reproachfully or lightly of your native place. It is nearly akin, I hold, to treating an aged parent with marked disrespect. Because your lot may chance to be cast in the midst of a crowd and in marts of business, it is a poor reason for ignoring or lightly esteeming the place which might well be the dearest spot on earth to you.

The occasion which has gathered from wide dispersions this vast assembly is quite unique and suggestive. It is the first of its kind ever witnessed on this charming spot and by these delightful surroundings, and so long must it be before there can be another like it, here, that to us it is almost as if it would for-

ever stand alone. It carries us back, it bears us forward. We learn reality from the historic past and are exercised by conflicting conjectures concerning the unrevealed future. It is clearly defined knowledge, on the one hand, and seeing as in a glass darkly, on the other. This day of commemoration and festivity is rapidly passing like all other days, and we are soon to go again to our several fields of labor; some to be speedily removed from the arena of conflicts and duties, and others to contend long and late in the strife of life. Let us be diligent, for needful labor is abundant; let us be earnest, for vast interests are at stake. Let us be serious, for conscience as well as revelation bears the unmistakable impress of responsibility. The departure of former years adjure to a wise and vigorous service, and coming generations are even now appealing in silent eloquence. Let us rejoice in happy greetings and with profound gratitude on this memorable gathering of friends and neighbors long and far sundered, and when we again separate never more to meet this side of the invisible, may His divine benediction which maketh rich, be the abiding inheritance of all far beyond, even to the third and fourth generations of those who trace their ancestry back to these pleasant hills and valleys.

The following hymn was written for the celebration by Rev. Charles S. Porter, who was a descendant of Rev. Nehemiah Porter and was brought up on the farm which Lucius S. Hall now owns in Watson.

#### ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

One hundred years ago  
The sun walked in the sky,  
Stars in their far off homes  
Blinked bright and silently,  
And savage beasts and savage men  
Were monarchs sole of hill and glen.

The hardy pioneer  
Rose mid the sylvan scene,  
The woodman's sturdy stroke  
Rang loud o'er hill and plain;  
From hillside and from mountain nook  
Curled slow to heaven the cabin's smoke.

Since then the scroll of time  
Hath record of vast change.  
Harvests have graced the fields,  
Flocks, herds, the mountain range,  
And human life hath been a-blaze  
With bridal and with burial days.

We stand where others stood,  
What others sowed, we reap,  
Transmit the garnered good,  
Then with them fall asleep.  
God over all does thus fulfill  
His purpose vast, His sovereign will.

One hundred years to come,  
Fled hour by hour away,  
Who then will here find home  
And celebrate the day?  
That history of joy or woe  
Nor man nor angel can foreknow.

God of our Fathers hear;  
Command thy grace to rest  
On coming thousands here,  
All blessing and all blest.  
A grand succession here arise,  
Be called and garnered for the skies.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CIVIL WAR, 1861-65

The inhabitants of Ashfield responded promptly to the startling call for troops in April, 1861. The first town meeting to act on matters relating to the war was held May 4, at which it was "voted to pay all inhabitants of the town who have enlisted and who shall hereafter enlist as volunteers in the military service of the United States, to the number of fifteen, the sum of twenty-six dollars per month while in such service, inclusive of what the government shall pay them. Also to pay them at the same rate while drilling for such service." November 29, the selectmen were directed to pay State aid to the families of soldiers in service. August 2, 1862, voted to pay a bounty of \$150 to each volunteer who shall enlist for three years' service before the 10th of the month, \$125 to each who shall enlist between the 10th and the 20th, and \$100 to each who shall enlist between the 20th and 30th to the number of eighteen. September 9th, it was voted to pay a bounty of \$100 for volunteers for nine months' service. October 15, the selectmen were directed to continue the payment of State aid to families of deceased volunteers the same as when the soldiers were living. January 17, 1863, the selectmen were directed to pay \$900 to volunteers who have entered the military service as substitutes. April 29, 1864, \$4,250 was raised by vote of the town to be used in filling up its quota of soldiers. June 4, the selectmen were directed to enlist twenty men as soon as possible to answer for any future call of the president, up to March, 1865. March 6, 1865, voted to pay a bounty of \$125 each to five enlisted veterans. May 10, voted to raise \$4,500 to refund to individuals money they had subscribed in 1864 for recruiting purposes. During the war, every needed service was promptly made, and Ashfield was not found wanting. The amount of money appropriated and expended by the town on account of the war was \$22,279. One hundred and twenty-four men were

furnished for the war, which was a surplus of sixteen over and above all demands.

The following list is prepared in part from the adjutant-general's reports, and is designed to include all who were residents of this town and went into the army, together with a few others who may be properly mentioned in recounting the military services of Ashfield. Mere recruits hired abroad, in Boston or elsewhere, are not given.

#### 10TH REGIMENT

James R. Howes	Cyrus B. Cone
Micajah H. Vincent	William T. Vincent
Rufus A. Lilly	Mason D. Vincent
Daniel G. Howes	Horace V. Taylor
Levi S. Elmer	Leander V. Hill
Murray J. Guilford	Stephen Bates
William E. Willis	Henry Parsons
Alonzo H. Warren	

#### 25TH REGIMENT

James Coughlin

#### 27TH REGIMENT

R. Bement Smith	Joel Wing
Reuben W. Lawrence	

#### 31ST REGIMENT

Reuben W. Taylor	Levi O. Warren
William L. Luce	Harvey E. Bailey
Luther D. Chapin	Wells P. Taylor
Ephraim P. Taylor	James A. Treat
Henry Guilford	Sumner H. Bardwell
Leroy C. Beals	William R. Harris
Oliver Warren	Willis N. Howes
Milo F. Warren	Shepard R. Dyer

#### 34TH REGIMENT

Ralph H. Ranney	Henry C. Hallet
Roswell L. Church	Lafayette Eddy
Alphonzo Church	Harvey Hadlock
Norris E. Chapin	Erastus Kenney
George Ward	Ira N. Hitchcock



## 37TH REGIMENT

Joel Lilly, Jr.	Darius W. Taylor
Caspar Lilly	Henry J. Green
Henry L. Luce	J. McCormick

## 52ND REGIMENT

Frederick H. Smith	John L. Howes
Elon S. Williams	Sylvester Howes
Manley Guilford	Henry F. Kilbourn
William H. Ford	Alfred C. Thayer
Joseph V. Harmon	Lewis Williams
Elisha B. Howes	Oscar Richardson
Lewis Eldredge	Edward F. Hale
George D. Braman	Ansel K. Bradford
	G. Benj. Carter

## 60TH REGIMENT

Frank R. Willis	John H. Pomeroy
Chester A. Bronson	Edwin Phillips
William H. Smith	Ozias Willis
James S. Wilde	Joseph H. Smith
	George S. Booth

## 1ST MASS. CAVALRY

Emory H. Bement	Thomas L. Munsell
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## 12TH N. Y. CAVALRY

John E. Phillips
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## SERVED ELSEWHERE

Albert Lilly	Elias T. Yeamans
Charles W. Richardson	Orange Richardson

The following Ashfield men died on the field of battle, in rebel prisons, or from wounds and sickness:

Reuben W. Taylor	Lafayette F. Eddy
Caspar Lilly	Milo F. Warren
Lewis Eldredge	Joel Wing
Sylvester Howes	Elon S. Williams
William E. Willis	Ephraim P. Taylor
Edward F. Hale	R. Bement Smith

## 10TH MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT

This regiment was made up in the spring of 1861 by recruits from western Massachusetts and Company H from Shelburne Falls and vicinity. The history of the regiment says that on May 15, Company H marched through Buckland to Ashfield where they camped over night, then went on to Conway, and were hospitably entertained by the citizens on the way. Andrew Sauer, one of the veterans, says they camped on a green here in Ashfield and that the people brought in eggs, bread, pies, and so on, more than they could dispose of, and that afterwards in some of their hungry marches they often wished they could have what they left over here. Of the two or three citizens of the village who are now alive and remember the affair, one lady says they camped in the old academy yard, and that missing her little two-year-old girl in the morning, she found her eating breakfast with the soldiers.

This regiment went into camp at Hampden Park, Springfield, June 14, were mustered in June 21, and left Boston by steamer July 25 for Washington. In the three years of service the regiment was in fifteen important battles, all in Virginia except Gettysburg. At Fair Oaks the regiment suffered severely. Ten were killed in Company H and eighteen wounded. In this battle and at Malvern Hill, coming soon after, five Ashfield boys were wounded, viz., Murray J. Guilford, James R. Howes, Daniel G. Howes, Henry Parsons and Micajah H. Vincent. The regiment suffered heavily all through the bloody battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and came home at the expiration of service in June, 1864. Some of the Ashfield boys who had been discharged for disability occasioned by wounds or sickness were transferred to other regiments,—Murray J. Guilford and Micajah H. Vincent to the 37th, and Rufus A. Lilly reënlisted in the 52nd. James R. Howes was from Ashfield, but enlisted in the Northampton Company, said to be the first from this town to volunteer for the war. Micajah H. Vincent was of Ashfield descent and received the bounty from this town was taken prisoner twice and spent nearly a year in southern prisons. William E. Willis, after being a year in the service,

died of disease at White House, Virginia. By some oversight his name was not put on the Ashfield monument.

### 34TH REGIMENT

This regiment left Worcester August 15, 1862, and arrived at Arlington Heights, Virginia, August 18. On the 24th marched to Alexandria where the regiment remained doing garrison duty until May 1, 1863, when it marched to Upton's Hill. June 2, went to Washington, D. C. While there performed guard and provost duty, and was noted for perfection in drill, discipline, neatness, and splendid condition of men, arms, and accoutrements. July 9, went to Maryland Heights, and on the 14th crossed the Potomac in pontoon boats, and drove the enemy from Harper's Ferry, Virginia. October 18, fought and routed twice their number of Imboden's rebel mounted infantry, near Ripon, capturing many prisoners. In December, formed part of a force of 1,500 men, who, under command of Colonel Wells of the 34th, advanced up the Shenandoah Valley to Harrisonburg a hundred miles to coöperate with General Averill in his famous raid on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. The expedition returned to Harper's Ferry in 93 hours, without a straggler or the loss of a single man, and with over a hundred prisoners. In March, 1864, went to Martinsburg, and April 29 advanced with General Sigel's command up the Shenandoah Valley. May 15, were hotly engaged in the battle of New Market. June 5, fought at Piedmont, Virginia, under General Hunter, reached Staunton the 6th and fought at Lynchburg the 18th of June. In the retreat from that place to Kanawha Valley the men suffered greatly for want of provisions. Next fought at Island Ford near Snickers Gap, July 18; with a portion of General Early's army at Winchester, July 24; and at Martinsburg, July 25; August 26, at Halltown attacked the enemy's skirmish line, drove it from its position and captured many prisoners. Were in all the actions under General Sheridan in the valley, being hotly engaged at Berryville September 3, Winchester September 19, Fishers' Hill September 22. Next fought at Stickney's Farm October 13. In this engagement the

regiment suffered terribly, losing in killed and wounded 102 men out of 240 men engaged. Here Col. George D. Wells was killed. Were engaged at Cedar Creek October 19, where Sheridan had his famous ride. December 19, were ordered to the Army of the James to join the 24th Army Corps.

The regiment was in front of Petersburg through the winter, took part in the taking of Battery Gregg, and was in at the finish when Lee surrendered. The boys came home to Ashfield during the centennial exercises in the grove back of the academy, June 18, 1865, and were received by the crowd with lusty cheers.

Mr. Roswell L. Church has written from his diary a very interesting account of the doings of this regiment which is worthy of being printed in full. We give a few extracts. In describing the battle of Winchester, he says:

A shell from one of these guns struck the knapsack of a man near me and sent its contents flying into the air. The brave fellow looked up and smilingly remarked to his comrades, "That was a close shave, boys," and as he ceased another shell struck him full in the face and exploding, scattered his quivering flesh over his comrades lying near. We lay on this line I should think for half an hour. I said lay, but we were not idle. We loaded and fired as fast as we could, but there wasn't much satisfaction in shooting at the stone wall. All this while the rebels were carelessly firing towards us and didn't seem to care if they did hit somebody. George Ward was making preparations to shoot at the stone wall when a grape shot came along, struck the gun barrel, split the stock off and bent the barrel into a half circle. George laughed and told Capt. Elwell he had no further use for it. Henry Bowers of our Co. had just been killed, so George took his gun and went on shooting. Next we knew, the rest of our brigade had caught up with us and joined us on our left, also Dowell's men on our right. Now we shouted louder than ever and charged on the stone wall. The rebels becoming frightened ran away and left some of their cannon and men to fall into our hands. I remember very well how brave I felt when I saw those fellows skedaddling.

Our regiment lost in this battle 104 killed and wounded.

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This from the battle of New Market:

The enemy advanced steadily until within close range, when our battery of artillery (each gun loaded with grape and canister)

thundered forth its deadly missiles, mowing swaths through the rebel ranks and checking for a while their advance. The field was becoming sadly strewn with dead and wounded. My brother Alphonso was shot down by my side, saying to me when he fell, "Ros, I'm gone up!" My reply was, "No, I hope not," but I soon made up my mind that he was mortally wounded, as a musket ball had struck him square in the breast. I took off his blanket and placed it under his head for a pillow. Just then the 34th was ordered to charge bayonet. I picked up my gun and rushed forward with the boys at a double quick. We had almost reached the enemy's line and they were mowing us down like grass with a scythe, when Col. Wells caught the color bearer by his shoulders, whirled him around and ordered a retreat. Our men (what there was left of us) about faced and charged back to the rear.

When I reached the spot where my brother lay, I called to the boys for help to carry him off the field, but in their ardor to execute the last order, not one of them heeded my calling. They all rushed past me and back some twelve or fifteen rods, halted, turned again and faced the enemy. I was now between two fires, and in this dangerous position my thoughts ran rapidly. My brother was laboring for breath and I thought he was dying; it was not in my power to help him; if I stayed there I would either be killed or taken prisoner; if I saved myself I might be of some further use to Uncle Sam. I chose the latter and started back. Had taken about a dozen steps perhaps when a bullet came along and scraped the skin off from the top of my right ear. This increased my speed and when I had almost reached our line something else struck me in the head that fairly made my brains rattle. I was dazed; the atmosphere turned black. I could hardly see which way to go, but as I happened to be aimed the same way the boys were going (they were in full retreat) I staggered along after them. The heavens were letting down a deluge of water on us and this brought me out of the darkness into light. To make a long story shorter, the rain pouring down on my head saved me from fainting. The Virginia soil when it is wet is peculiar and when encountered it will add, but won't subtract. During this flight it added on to our feet as we moved along; so much so that some of the boys lost their shoes and had to march in their stockings. At last I reached the pike, where I caught a ride with an artilleryman on a caisson. Our army fell back to the Shenandoah River, crossed over into Mount Jackson, burned the bridge, and the rebels gave up the chase.



The 34th went into this battle with 450 men and our loss in killed, wounded and prisoners was some over 200, nearly half. That night Sigel's command marched back towards Cedar Creek, our late camp ground, reaching the place the next day (the 16th) having been fifty-five hours almost continuously marching or under fire, in a constant and pouring rain. The march in that time was 52 miles. During our night march I rode with another of our wounded boys in an army wagon. This conveyance was loaded almost full of officers' tents.

Mr. Church was sent to the hospital at Martinsburg where he remained a number of days, but he became uneasy and requested a pass to return to his regiment although he had not fully recovered. Later his journal says:

May 29th we continued our advance, arriving at Rude's Hill near our late battle ground where we went into camp and while there, sitting on my knapsack, making out a detail of men for guard, Ralph Ranney came along and told me that our pickets had found my brother Fon alive in an old barn just outside their lines. This information was to me like the raising of the dead. I arose from my knapsack, dropped my work for a comrade to do and started with Ralph for the Col.'s tent. We got permission to visit Fon with orders not to stay long as he was outside our lines and there was danger of our being gobbled. We found my brother with several other of our wounded boys lying on the barn floor. There was a scant supply of straw between them and their plank bed. Fon was very glad to see us. Was cheerful for all he had lain there on his back for two weeks. Was so weak that he couldn't turn over without help. A Minié bullet had gone through his right lung and lodged just under the skin close by his spinal column. A rebel soldier had cut it out with a jackknife. His wound hadn't been dressed at all. Maggots were crawling around the mouth of it. Although in this precarious condition, Fon's tongue ran like a wind-mill, how he was going to get well and fight the Johnnies some more, etc., etc. After making him as comfortable as possible we returned to camp.

May 30th we established a hospital for our wounded in an old schoolhouse in the village of New Market. I helped to move my brother there. The boys were furnished with clean clothing, medicines and provisions; also several nurses and a surgeon to minister to their wants. My brother Fon remained in New Market a few weeks until on the road to recovery, then was



taken to Richmond, lodged in Libby Prison for one day, then taken out and put in hospital, where he stayed for 17 days. Was examined by a rebel surgeon who pronounced him no good for fighting them any more, so he was exchanged and sent into the Union lines.

Of the surrender of Lee after the Army of the James, including this regiment, had by forced marches cut off the retreat of the rebels, Mr. Church says: .

The scene that followed at this time beggars description. Thousands of men flinging their caps and shouting so loud that it seemed as though they were splitting their throats. Many of them were laughing through the tears that were rolling in big drops down their cheeks while others were dancing around swinging their arms and yelling like men just gone crazy. There is no use, I can't tell it. I know that I laughed and cried and shouted and under the intense excitement I had forgotten that I was tired. Word soon passed along our lines that General Lee had proposed surrender of his entire army to our forces.

Of this scene in a letter to his father, Henry S. Ranney, Ralph Ranney says:

An order not to fire passes along the line. What does it mean? We soon know. A wild, enthusiastic, prolonged cheer runs along the line as the truth is known. Lee and his army have surrendered. Off fly the caps. Oh how the boys shout! Capt. Elwell climbs a tree. Can it be true? it is most too good to be so. Yes, we pass through a wood and there beyond us lies the remnant of Lee's fine Army of Northern Virginia. I tell you it was the happiest moment of my life.

#### 52ND MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT

In the summer of 1862, President Lincoln's call for "Three hundred thousand more" was issued for three years' men and a little later another call for the same number of nine months' men.

A number of the young men of Ashfield consulted quietly together and decided to answer the call. In August a war meeting was held in the old Academy yard with a large number of citizens in attendance. There were speakers from abroad

who made lengthy and strong patriotic speeches, closing with an impassioned appeal for volunteers to come forward and enlist in their country's cause, but not one of the boys responded. In the evening, after the excitement was over, they met and each one signed a paper pledging himself to enlist. They said they did not care to make a scene at the meeting, they preferred to do it quietly without a show. The ages ranged from seventeen years upwards. They formally enlisted at Shelburne Falls the fore part of September in Company E as a part of the 52nd Regiment raised mostly in Franklin and Hampshire counties. They were mustered in October 2 and went into camp at Greenfield on Petty's plain, now the Agricultural grounds. They were under drill there until November 20, when they were sent to New York. They went into camp at a park on Long Island until December 4, when they embarked on the steamer Illinois destined for the Southwest to become a part of General Banks' expedition.

After an uncomfortable voyage they arrived at Baton Rouge December 17. Here and in this vicinity they remained in camp until the 13th of March when they made a hurried march towards Port Hudson. The object of the march was evidently to attract the attention of the rebels while Farragut's fleet was going up the river to attempt to pass Port Hudson. The night of the 14th they were near enough to Port Hudson to see the shells thrown and to see the great flash when the Mississippi was blown up. They soon marched back to Baton Rouge near which place they remained until the latter part of the month, making some raids into the country.

The last part of the month they went with a large portion of Banks' army into western Louisiana without much fighting, driving and scattering quite a body of the enemy under General Taylor. After several long marches, when at Algiers, they were ordered to Port Hudson one hundred miles distant, to which place they marched, arriving there May 20. Here they remained until after the surrender of the fort, July 9. The last part of the siege they were in earthworks within three hundred yards of the outer works of the fort, and where in the daytime it was sure

death to show a head above the breastworks. Elisha B. Howes was shot through the arm here.

A few weeks after the surrender of the fort, there was some mutiny among certain of the nine months' regiments, because they could not be sent home at once as their time of enlistment had expired. July 20, Brigadier General Stone reports this to General Banks and adds, "At the same time I have elected the 52nd Mass. Reg. in which there has been no instance of refusal to do duty or of insubordination for immediate shipment North." They accordingly left Port Hudson the 23rd, arriving at Cairo the 30th, where eighteen of their number were left in the hospital there, being so sick as to be unable to travel by rail. As they were short for nurses the Colonel was requested to detail several from the regiment to care for those left behind, but he hesitated to do this, preferring volunteers who were willing to stay, and Colonel Greenleaf testifies in the history of the 52nd that George Wait and Truman Bowman now living in Ashfield, volunteered to remain behind and care for their sick comrades.

The regiment arrived in Massachusetts, August 3. Judge Thompson says, "At its departure the regiment had 939 men and returned with 773; 85 had died of disease; 11 were killed or died of wounds; 16 sick were left at Mound City, and 2 officers and 34 men were unable to leave New Orleans. The 52nd lost in about one year's service ten and two-fifths per cent., a greater proportionate loss than any other Mass. Regiment." Of the Ashfield boys, Lewis Eldredge died of the fever at Baton Rouge, January 26; Sylvester Howes died on the voyage between Port Hudson and Cairo; Elon Williams was discharged for sickness, came home, and died September 3. Edward F. Hale was one of the eighteen left at Cairo but was able to come home later and died at his father's, October 1.

### 31ST REGIMENT

Went into camp at Pittsfield, November 20, 1861, where it remained until about February 1, when it went to Camp Chase at Lowell and on the 20th sailed for Fortress Monroe. After a short tarry they sailed for Ship Island, arriving there

March 23. They went up the river to Fort Jackson and St. Philip, took part in Bayou Teche, Port Hudson and Red River expedition. Early in March, 1865, the regiment was sent by water to Pensacola Bay, Florida, then marching across the country it took part in the capture of Mobile, April 12. The regiment was mustered out September 24, having been in service three years and ten months, and lost 205 officers and men. Two Taylors, Reuben W. and Wells P., father and son, also Ephraim, a relative, were in this regiment from this town. Seven Taylors from Ashfield of this family were in the Revolutionary war.

No history of this regiment has yet been published.

### 37TH REGIMENT

The 37th went into camp at Pittsfield in August, 1862, and September 7th started for Washington which they reached the evening of the 10th and went into camp on Arlington Heights until October 1, when they were sent to the main army near Antietam, Maryland. Here they met with the Massachusetts 10th and were glad to see those who remained of their Ashfield friends. They were then incorporated with the Army of the Potomac, were at the battles of Fredricksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. In August, 1863, they were sent to New York City to help guard against the threatened riot. In October they were back again with the Army of the Potomac and were in the fierce battles through the Wilderness, Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor. From June until December they were in the Shenandoah Valley coöperating with Sheridan, then were sent back to the main army at Petersburg, and helped to finish up Lee's army in the spring. Of the Ashfield men, Caspar Lilly died of disease April 23, 1863, and his body was sent home for burial. His brother Joel was wounded in the assault on Petersburg, April 2, seven days before the surrender of Lee, and Henry Luce was wounded the 6th, only three days before the surrender. Joel and Caspar Lilly's grandfather and great grandfather were Revolutionary soldiers. Darius W. Taylor was another son of Reuben W., mentioned in the 31st regiment.

The 60th Regiment was composed of men enlisted for only one hundred days near the close of the war. They were sent to Maryland at first, then to Indianapolis, Ind., where they had about 10,000 rebel prisoners under guard. They were in service about four months.

27th Regiment. Of the three Ashfield men belonging to this regiment Joel Wing was killed in battle and Bement Smith died of sickness contracted in the army. It was a three years' regiment and was in North Carolina and in the battles before Richmond.

The 1st Massachusetts Cavalry was in some of the most important battles of the war, including Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and Cold Harbor.

The 25th Regiment, to which James Coughlin belonged, was from the eastern part of the state. It saw service in North Carolina, Virginia, and in the battles before Richmond.

Albert Lilly was in the 8th Ohio and saw severe fighting. Was at Gettysburg and faced Pickett's famous charge on Cemetery Hill. He was also with Grant through the Wilderness.

In March, 1866, it was "Voted to raise \$650 for the purpose of erecting a monument or memorial, to perpetuate the memory of those persons of this town whose lives have been sacrificed in the effort to sustain the Government against the Slaveholders' Rebellion. Voted that Granville B. Hall and Dr. Knowlton constitute a committee to carry this vote into effect, by establishing said monument or memorial." This vote was duly carried into effect by the committee, and a monument was erected in the form of a drinking fountain bearing the

names of the fallen Ashfield soldiers. Soon after its dedication, the following lines appeared in *Harper's Easy Chair*, written by Mr. Curtis:

And these brothers whose incalculable devotion and sacrifice yonder memorial on the village green records, have made us all better, and have given a sweeter strain to the world's story. They have made it easier to do what America was plainly designed to effect. The thought of these brave boys, unmindful of glory, intent only upon duty, whose names we spell out as we stop on the weary way in the summer noon, refreshes our hope and faith, and stimulates nobler endeavor as the living water from the hills which we sip enlivens and comforts our frames.



## CHAPTER XIX

### MILITIA COMPANIES AND OTHER MATTERS

In 1800, the town had two companies of enrolled militia, the Ashfield "North Company," then recently commanded by Capt. Phillip Phillips, and the Ashfield "South Company," then under Capt. Asa Cranson. The two companies of infantry were maintained in a good state of discipline and efficiency, in which their officers took much pride, and held a high standing in popular favor for some forty years, when the legal requirement for their existence was changed. In 1827, a general training, or brigade "muster" was held on "the Plain," the soldiers of this and neighboring towns having been warned "to meet at the house of John Williams, innholder in Ashfield, on Monday the tenth day of October, at half past six o'clock in the forenoon, for Military duty and inspection, with arms and equipments, as the law directs." The regiment was at that time under command of Col. Nehemiah Hathaway of Ashfield, and the South Company under Capt. Albinas Lilly. (No record of the North Company is found.) "Agreeable to a Division, Brigade and Regimental order," a "muster" was held in the northwest part of the town, near the tavern of Ezra Williams, October 6, 1831. The regiment was then under Col. Abel Williams of Ashfield, and the South Company was under Capt. Lemuel Bryant.

At the time of this muster, the companies maneuvered in the "Hawley Mowing," what is now J. R. Smith's potato lot. On the Plain they paraded in what is now Mrs. Alvan Hall's mow lot.

Different officers were chosen from year to year in the two companies, so that besides those named above there were Capt. William Bassett, Capt. Justus Smith, Capt. Nathaniel Holmes, Capt. Kimball Howes, Capt. Chapin and others.

Mrs. Miles gives this pleasant picture of the old training days:

In our town were two companies of militia, the North and South. These had their May training, and another in autumn. Every able bodied man between eighteen and forty-five was

enrolled as militia. Before the training, my father's old flint lock gun was taken apart, the barrel, lock, bands and bayonet scoured to the brightness of silver, then put together and was in readiness for the semi-annual training; and when the great day arrived he donned his regimentals, and was ready for his outing.

I seem to see him now dressed in his Uniform. A coat of fine blue "Broadcloth" trimmed with scarlet cloth of the same kind which was of a very different texture from his ordinary dress. On his hat was a piece of tin or some other metal japanned and lettered "Ashfield South Co.," with some figures which I do not remember; then to crown the whole, a stiff feather of white tipped with scarlet. Now he was equipped for training, or for the Muster in Autumn when the Regiment met. Then came some additional maneuvers, sometimes a sham fight, some of the Companies being Indians, or British. This was fun for the onlooker. O, the "Drum and fife!" Plainfield's Cavalry sometimes came to our training; their horses were finely trained—I can almost see them still as I saw them one bright afternoon as we children sat upon the hill of our pasture and enjoyed the whole, and especially the shrill notes of the fife which I have never forgotten. Yes, that "Russian March," I hear it yet. But the fife! Is that a thing of the past? I have not seen or heard one for long, long years. Very likely I should not like the shrill tones as in early life. I must not omit one or two other things necessary for a complete outfit. There were the straps; one for the sheath of the bayonet, the other for the cartridge box which was from the right shoulder and for the bayonet from the left. In the cartridge box were twelve holes for cartridges. Now our soldier was ready to march, countermarch and perform all evolutions required; and after several hours of this came home satisfied and happy, if very tired.

My father greatly enjoyed these gatherings, as they were nearly all the outings of his busy life; indeed he "trained" two or three years after the law would have released him.

Of course, the early settlers had to contend with wild beasts in addition to their other trials. Mr. Marcus Parker said his father used to tell how after they had cleared up a little piece of land in Cape Street back of the log house, they had to go up and drive the wolves off every day. Some of the Phillipses living have heard their grandfather tell how he used to lie awake nights and hear the wolves howl on Ridge Hill. In 1787, voted to

raise a bounty of four dollars for each wolf killed in town, and a little later there is a record of Squire Williams and Roland Sears each being paid a bounty for a wolf.

Bear hunting was quite a pastime. Capt. Phillip Phillips killed twenty-nine bears in one season, and this story is verified by his descendants. Mr. Barnabas Howes tells how Heber Honestman, the negro who lived with Captain Phillips, was out on Mill Hill looking for bears in the traps set, when he accidentally got caught in one himself. Not returning, a search was made for him and when found he seemed to be pleased at the situation. When asked what pleased him so, he said he had been thinking how the old bear would laugh if he should come along and find him in the trap. But the poor man was badly maimed and never fully recovered from his injuries. Bear Swamp on the Bear Swamp road to Watson was said to be a favorite resort for bears. Barnabas Howes, Sr., (born in 1777, died in 1853) said that when a boy he went out to this swamp with Isaiah Washburn to look at the bear traps there. There are many ledges around the edge of the swamp. The "Old Bears' Den" in Ceylon Bates' pasture was a rendezvous for bears. The last bear killed in Ashfield was in 1831. Mr. Lyman Eldredge who lived on the Colonel Emmet farm came up to the village one morning and said he saw a bear down "Dug Hill" making his way up the hill towards the south. His story was hardly believed, but the tracks were investigated and Bruin soon had a "large following" of men and dogs. He was finally treed west of the farm where Bert Richmond now lives and here the poor fellow ended his wanderings.

Beavers were in the streams and meadows at an early date. A favorite camping place of the Indians for the purpose of trapping beaver was near the brooks north of where William Gray now lives. Hence the name "Beaver Meadow Farm." School boys have picked up arrow heads and other Indian relics in this section.

Sixty years ago coon hunting was largely in order when the corn was on in the fall and a small party with a good dog could usually get half a dozen or more plump, fat fellows in a single night.

Then, in the fall there were also one or more "squirrel hunts." Two persons would "choose up sides" for the game with the understanding that it should be "honest," or that each side "might cheat all it could." At the close of the stated time—a given number of days—the parties were to bring in their game, have a "count" and the beaten party had to pay for the supper at the hotel. Mr. A. W. Crafts likes to tell the story of a squirrel hunt in which his brother Josephus—"Ceph"—was one of the "captains." They met to "count" just at nightfall at John Williams' hotel, now the Ranney block, where the game was to be taken, carefully guarded and deposited on each side of the old town hall ready for the tally. The contest seemed to be in doubt when after dusk teams began to arrive, apparently from the outskirts, laden with such bags of game for "Ceph's" side that the other party caved at once. "Better count," said "Ceph." "No, no, we give it up, let's go down to supper." After supper was eaten and the vanquished party had paid Uncle John the bill, "Ceph" proposed that they go upstairs and look over the game. It was found that the bags last brought in contained not only game, but turnips, cabbages, and much other material besides the genuine article. The other party had to admit that this was a "cheat all you can" with a vengeance.

One hundred years ago fish were plentiful in the streams.

Sixty years ago the farmer's boy could dig his bait, cut his pole,—although nearly every prudent boy had his seasoned pole back of the shed—and in two or three hours could catch trout enough for the dinner of a fair-sized family in almost any of the streams. Yet there was no posting of brooks, no fish commissions, hatcheries, or any of the legal paraphernalia to "protect" the streams now almost destitute of the finny tribe.

The little lake or "Great Pond" by the village was well filled with pickerel. There was then no law against taking fish with the snare or spear and hundreds of pounds were taken in this way in the night besides what were caught with the hook in the daytime. The fish would run up near the shore at night and three grown-up boys or men, one with some twenty pounds of white birch bark over his shoulders, another with an iron "jack"

weighing some six or eight pounds on the end of a six-foot pole to furnish a torch, and the third party with a brass wire snare on the end of a two-foot string attached to a short pole would slip the noose over the head of the fish, blinded by the glare, and by a sudden jerk bring him to terra firma, when he would be secured. Later, instead of birch bark, a ball of rags saturated with kerosene was used for a torch. From six to ten pounds of pickerel weighing from one quarter of a pound to two pounds each was considered a fair haul, and home at two o'clock in the morning. On nearly every quiet night through May and June one or more such parties could be seen, sometimes in boats. In spite of the large quantities taken there seemed to be no diminution, and the next year the fish seemed to be as plentiful as ever.

Ownership in the "Great Pond" first appeared when Asa Sanderson bought the "Pond Lot" in 1808, using the water for his tannery works. This was the land around the lower end of the pond. In 1848, Sanderson deeded to the Conway Manufacturing Company the right to raise the pond seven feet, reserving two feet of water for himself. The company at considerable expense raised the dike on the south and east which occasioned a flowage on the meadows above, and a lawsuit with the Bassetts who owned the meadow. The company used their privilege for quite a number of years. In 1875, A. D. Flower bought the Bassett farm, then owned by Walter Lesure, including all rights to the reservoir, and also in 1879 from L. C. Sanderson all his rights to water in the pond. This to secure its use for Mr. Flower's mill. At the time of the breaking away of the reservoir it was said to cover seventy-five acres. The brook that runs past the creamery can easily be made a feeder for the "Great Pond." In the forties, the boys of the Steady Lane school, one noontime, by a little digging in what is now Robert Howes' pasture turned the brook so that the water ran into the pond. In a day or two an indignant protest came from Dorus Graves for the loss of water from his clothier's shop, and the boys had to turn it back again. M. M. Belding now owns much of the land adjoining the pond and has been liberal in allowing its use by the public.



The "round ball" mentioned by Dr. Hall was similar to that now termed "base ball" without being hampered with its science and system, its fuss and feathers. Wicket ball was played on the cross street in front of the Episcopal church door. Wrestling was quite popular, "side hold," "back hold" and "at arm's length." At almost every town meeting a ring would be formed in front of the old town hall in the afternoon and a wrestling match started. When one was thrown, another was called in to take his place. Samuel and John Hale, Joshua Hall, Chapin Elmer and the Greens were among the principal contestants. At one time it was difficult to get anyone to match the young man who had thrown all his competitors, until Dea. Josiah Smith, a man well advanced in years and the grandfather of Alvah and Addison Howes, stepped into the ring and took hold of the victor. For a time it seemed a close contest, but youthful muscle proved too much for the old gentleman who was finally laid upon his back. The crowd admired his grit and cheered him lustily as the staid old deacon brushed the dust from his clothes and slowly wended his way into the hall with the remark, "This thing couldn't have been done forty years ago; guess I ain't quite so limber as I was then."

Of course Ashfield had its Fourth of July frolics as now, in which the "Old Swivel" played an important part. This was a piece of iron about twenty inches in length with a diameter of six inches, square at one end for about six inches, circular the remainder of the length, with a bore about two inches in diameter, a proper priming hole and weighed some fifty or seventy-five pounds. This, when loaded to the muzzle, thoroughly tamped down and "touched off" with a slow match, would "speak" with no uncertain sound, sending its echoes to the farthest limits of the town. It was brought out on each Fourth of July, certain elections and other jollifications. It was the "town cannon" which like the Deerfield cannon coveted also by Greenfield and Conway, was considered the property of the fellows who could get hold of and keep it. It was considered a smart thing to capture the gun. The Plain held possession of it for a while, then in some way it was captured by South Ashfield. It



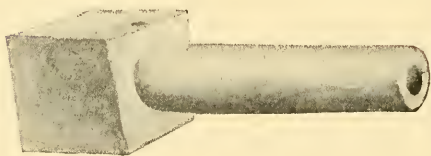
was rescued in this way: It was known that on a certain evening the Swivel was to be brought out and fired to celebrate some event. A few of the Plain boys were there, one of them with a block of wood under his coat about the size and color of the gun, with a rope attached to it. When the gun was brought out to be fired there was a little tussle over it, the block was dropped and several of the Plainers dragged it off with, "come on boys, we've got it," hotly pursued by the South Ashfielders while another Plainer picked up the Swivel and disappeared in the darkness in another direction and with the aid of a team in readiness soon had the gun delivered at the village. It was kept securely hidden, as the South Ashfield enemy was ever on the alert for its capture.

At one time after being taken out, it was closely pursued by a party from South Ashfield and was carried to the house of Mr. Moses Cook and hidden under a bed for a season.

The writer when quite young witnessed an adroit steal of the gun on an evening before the Fourth of July. It was being fired in the street in front of Mr. Crafts' store with a guard thought sufficient to defend the treasure from the southern invaders. At that time there were a sturdy lot of boys up in the Steady Lane district—Elisha Wing, the Bryants, Clarks and Halls. That night they proposed to have a little fun on their own account, and a number of them "happened" to be present. Just as the gun was ready to be fired, "Bill" Bryant "happened" to drive up in front of the store with an open buggy. He was warned to get out of the way as it was about to "go off." The slow match was applied, one end ignited, when Chauncey Bryant and one of the Clarks darted forward, kicked off the match and with almost incredible swiftness, threw the Swivel into the buggy, Bill touching the horse with the whip at the same instant, the gun "went off" up street before the astonished guard could come to their senses, they not expecting any enemy except from South Ashfield. The gun was heard from in different parts of the town through the night, and in the morning hours, close to the village. It was then brought back and delivered over to the guard, with a mild intimation that "they were not so smart as they thought they were."

It was usually kept in hiding for a part of the year but if brought out, there was very likely to be a scrimmage, and as it was thought that the boys were sometimes careless in its use, the matter began to be considered a nuisance by the older citizens. At length John J. Braman and Childs Sanderson, in some way learning where the gun was hidden, in the darkness of night sought out its retreat, took it to the shore of the pond next the Buckland road, and with a boat rowed out a short distance, sunk the object of their aversion in what was believed to be the deepest place in the Great Pond.

YE OLDE SWIVEL



REQUIESCAT IN PACE

## CHAPTER XX

### OLD FAMILIES AND EARLY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

In a few of the old families several of the same name settled in town and left posterity here. We give brief sketches of these separately; others will be noticed in the district sketches.

#### THE ALDENS

The Aldens from Stafford, Conn., were early interested in Huntstown for they bought land here as early as 1743. David and Daniel were cousins, and David in 1764 bought of Thomas Phillips lot No. 46 where Jerome Kendrick now lives. His descendants were on the farm for over seventy years. In 1835, Cyrus Alden was taxed for one thousand sheep on that farm. Descendants of David live here in the Gray, Field and perhaps other families.

Barnabas, a descendant of Daniel, lived on "Bug Hill" about forty rods west of where the Wings now live, where he raised seventeen children. There are many descendants from his family in Ashfield and vicinity. Ebenezer Alden was here at an early date, settled where Sidney P. Elmer lives, and his son Henry built the house. He was the ancestor of Charles Alden of Conway. Numerous inquiries concerning the Alden family are received from descendants in different parts of the country.

#### THE BELDINGS

Samuel and Ebenezer Belding, thought by Dr. Ellis to be cousins, were also here early, as Samuel was elected the first town clerk in 1765, and the Congregational church was organized at Deacon Ebenezer's house in 1763. Ebenezer lived where Mr. Joshua Hall did, also at or near where Charles Hocum now lives. In 1761, Samuel bought of Richard Ellis, lot No. 49, now the Lanfair place, "also all the Buildings and Edificies standing or being on said Lot." This was the first settled place in town and where the first frame house was built. Both of these men had large families, Samuel having twelve children. Hence the name for the district—"Beldingville." Four generations lived on the

farm bought of Mr. Ellis, viz., 1st, Samuel; 2nd, John; 3rd, Hiram; 4th, David Wilson, Milo M., Hiram H., Alvah N., and Frank. The last five constituted the well-known silk firm of Belding Brothers. They have large mills in Rockville, Conn., Northampton, Mass., Belding, Mich., San Francisco, Cal., and Montreal, Canada. Three of the brothers, Wilson, Hiram and Frank are dead. Milo M. has been for many years president of the successful enterprise but recently resigned in favor of his son Milo. Milo M. has a summer residence here and the many improvements he has made in and about the village show that he still retains a love for the place of his nativity.

#### SAMUEL, ELI AND DANIEL ELDRIDGE

Samuel, Eli and Daniel Eldredge, brothers from Yarmouth, settled here before 1800, Eli and Samuel dealing in land here as early as 1777. Samuel settled west of the road at the south part of Cape Street where the summer house called Journey's End has lately been erected; Eli, about one hundred rods west of where Benjamin Sears lives in Cape Street; and Daniel coming later, in 1795 bought lot No. 12, 2nd Division, being the lot on which Colonel Emmet lives, and settled there. Samuel was the ancestor of Allen Eldredge, Mrs. John Sears and Levi of the Hawley Eldredges. Eli was ancestor of the late E. Payson Eldredge and George Eldredge of Shelburne Falls, and Daniel the grandfather of Lucian and Miss Martha Eldredge.

#### THE HALLS

There were at least four Halls from the Cape who were early settlers here. Samuel settled in 1776 at this end of Cape Street on the east side of the Goshen highway, about one hundred rods south of the Taylor Corners. He was the father of Atherton, who moved to Savoy and left a numerous posterity, of Samuel who settled in Hawley, of Lot who was the father of Lot, Daniel and Joshua, and great-grandfather of Leon. Another of Samuel's sons was Jonathan who was the father of Samuel W., for twenty-five years a successful and respected merchant in the building where Mrs. Rosa Ranney now lives. His son, Henry C., married

Amanda Ferry, granddaughter of Esquire White. She still lives at the White homestead. Her husband died in 1873. Their son, William M., born in New York City in 1857, graduated at Yale in 1880 as valedictorian of his class, was for a time a member of the faculty, but finally resigned on account of ill health. He went to California for a time, then under advice in 1890 went to Colorado Springs. He became connected with the Colorado College and was chosen professor in that institution. But the old pulmonary trouble was not eradicated, and in the fall of 1894 he came to the old family home in Ashfield where he died in December.

David Hall, half brother to Samuel, and his son Reuben came first to Goshen, then to Ashfield just before 1780 and settled about a hundred rods west of the Allen Hall place, now owned by Mrs. Morgan. Reuben was an officer on board the ship from which the tea was thrown overboard in Boston harbor. He was the father of Thomas, who left a large posterity in this town. Thomas was the father of Lydia, whose "Reminiscences" are given in this book, also of Granville B., the father of President G. Stanley Hall and Rev. Robert Hall. G. Stanley Hall was born in 1845, graduated from Williams College in 1867, spent two years of study in Germany, was professor of psychology in Antioch College from 1872 to 1876, was lecturer at Harvard and Williams, in 1884 chosen professor in Johns Hopkins University, and in 1888 was called to the presidency of Clark University. Rev. Robert Hall was an esteemed clergyman in Cambridge where he died in 1876.

Joseph Hall came here in 1797 and bought of Jonathan Taylor lot No. 2, 2nd Division, which is a part of the farm which Addison G. now owns. He had eight children, of whom Joseph and Seth still have descendants here. He was the great grandfather of Charles A. Hall and grandfather of Joseph Hall, educated at Williams College, a teacher at Shelburne Falls Academy and Suffield Literary Institute and principal of the Hartford High School for twenty-five years, also principal emeritus until his death. This is one of the few farms which has been in the same family for over a hundred years. The house on this farm was built by Joseph in 1812.

Isaac Hall came to town a little later and settled where Allison Howes now lives. He was the father of Mrs. Eli Eldredge and Mrs. Allen Eldredge.

#### THE HOWESES

Of this family there were seven different men who settled and died in town. Kimball and Zachariah came in 1775 or 1776 and settled, Kimball where Samuel Williams and Ceylon Bates now live, and Zachariah a hundred rods farther south. Afterwards Kimball moved to New Boston where he died on the farm where William Howes now lives. He was the grandfather of Barnabas, author of two pamphlets of Ashfield history and great grandfather of the five children of George Howes now living in town. Of Zachariah's ten children, Joseph and Micajah settled just over the line in Hawley. They built a one-room log house near the site of J. R. Smith's windmill, where they lived until they had ten children, with only a chalk mark on the floor as a dividing line between the families. Then Joseph moved to West Hawley, and Micajah to Briar Hill and bought the place opposite the town farm, now occupied by Messrs. Clark as a city residence. Micajah was the father of Otis, and Micajah of Whately, and grandfather of the Spruce Corner boys, Harlan P. and his brothers.

Samuel, with his young son Heman, came about the same time and settled just north of the Great Pond on No. 4, 2nd Division. The cellar hole where his house stood may be seen on the hill about forty rods southwest of the house where Samuel's great-great-grandson Charles Richmond now lives. This farm has been in continuous possession of the family for a hundred and thirty-five years. Samuel's son, Heman, married a daughter of Jonathan Lilly and about the same time Eliakim, Jonathan's son, married Heman's sister. Heman raised seven sons, all of whom lived and died in Ashfield leaving many descendants here.

James R. Howes of Springfield, for twenty-five years state inspector of public buildings, is a grandson of Heman. His son, William J., is a successful architect in Holyoke. Charles P. of St. Paul, Minn., for over thirty years connected with the Belding Silk Co., is a great-grandson of Heman.



Ezekiel and Mark, sons of Sailor Thomas, settled a few years later in the northwest part of the town, Mark on the north side of the road where Henry A. and his son Abbott now live, and Ezekiel on the farm opposite. The pioneers made their journeys back and forth from the Cape on foot. The father, Sailor Tom, was a sea-going man and lived but a few years after coming here. He was buried in the Northwest cemetery in 1793. Ezekiel was the great-grandfather of Selectman Allison G. Howes, and Mark grandfather of Henry whose son Alfred is a popular school superintendent, now of Manchester, Conn.

Dea. Anthony Howes and his brother, Joshua, distant relatives of the other Howeses, settled on the hill about a hundred rods south of Mr. Farragut's place, on the old road to South Ashfield. Anthony was the father of Frederick Howes of Salem, a prominent lawyer there. He was the grandfather of Mrs. Wait Bement who was mother of Fred Bement of Northampton, another Ashfield boy who has been connected for many years with the Belding Silk Company. None of the descendants of Anthony or Joshua are now in town.

#### THE SEARSES

Roland, Paul, Enos and Jonathan Sears were early settlers at Cape Street. The old records say that April 28, 1774, Jonathan Coombs of Amherst sold to Roland and Paul Sears of Ashfield and Enos Sears of Yarmouth lot No. 48, 3rd Division, for £38 13s. Roland was in town as early as 1772. He and Paul, though only distantly related, bought and worked a tract of land together. They built two frame houses, and then cast lots for the occupancy. Roland drew for the north house where Mr. Cowan now lives, and Paul about thirty rods south. Roland had eight children; none of his posterity are now in town. Paul had eleven children. He was the great-grandfather of Sanford Boice; also of Miss Clara Ranney of this town. He died in 1808, aged fifty-eight. Enos was a brother of Paul and settled about a hundred rods farther south, where the old house built by Enos' son is still standing. Lemuel Sears of Holyoke, of the large and well-known firm of Lemuel Sears & Co., was a

great-grandson of Enos, also Lewis Sears, proprietor of the Charlemont Hotel. He died in 1822, aged sixty-nine. Jonathan Sears settled in 1797 on the farm where his grandson, Benjamin, now lives. He was father of Rev. Freeman Sears and of Asarela, who settled on the south part of the old farm where Asarela's son, Rev. Oliver Sears, was born. Town Clerk John M. Sears, also Henry G. Sears of Holyoke of the firm of Lemuel Sears & Co., are grandsons of Jonathan. He died in 1808, aged fifty-seven.

#### THE SMITHS

Most of the Smith families were descendants of the Wethersfield, Conn., Smiths. The historian of that town says that over twenty Smiths were original landholders there. Of these, Dr. Enos Smith of Ashfield was a descendant of Lieut. Samuel Smith who moved to Wethersfield in 1634.

Rev. Henry Smith of that town was the ancestor of Chileab, the third settler of this town, who was the ancestor of Houghton Smith. There is good evidence that Jonathan Smith, father of Chipman and ancestor of Henry M. and M. Elizabeth Smith, also of Charles A. Hall, was also a descendant of Rev. Henry Smith.

In 1778, Jonathan of Chatham, Conn., bought for £40 one-half of lot No. 41 in Ashfield, afterwards buying and selling other lots. Mr. Charles Lilly says that the "Lilliput Lodge" which Professor Norton bought for Mr. Lowell was built by one Smith and moved up from across the road. Without doubt this was Jonathan. With his son Chipman, he probably built the house on Peter Hill, as related in H. M. Smith's paper.

According to Massachusetts genealogies lately published, Joseph Smith was the Wethersfield ancestor of Frederick H. and Dr. Walter A. Smith, their Ashfield ancestors Elisha and Elijah coming to Ashfield with other brothers. The records here say Elijah Smith was married in 1777 and in 1801 bought lot No. 23, 3rd Division, which is in the south part of the town, building a house near where John Biljer's now is. He was the father of Henry, grandfather of Arnold, and great-grandfather

of Dr. Walter A., the successful and well-known physician of Springfield. Elisha is frequently mentioned in the Baptist Corner church records and probably lived in that part of the town or in Buckland. He was grandfather to Dea. F. H. Smith. The Smiths later living in the Chapel district, Reuben, Martin, Justus and others were probably of this line. All these Wethersfield Smiths emigrated by degrees up the river, finally landing in Ashfield. By the Registry records, Samuel Smith of Hadley bought and sold much land here.

In 1835 Josiah Smith of Gill, whose ancestors came from the east part of the state, bought of Reuben Bement the farm now owned by Dr. Murray. Deacon Josiah was the grandfather of Alvah W. and Walter Howes.

The early Smiths had large families, daughters as well as sons, and the records show that the girls were in good demand. Very many of the Ashfield people have the blood of the Smiths flowing through their veins without their knowledge.

#### THE TAYLORS

Three brothers by the name of Taylor settled near each other in the northerly part of Cape Street. Jonathan settled about half a mile south of where Fred Kelley lives and built a sawmill there. He was in town as early as 1769. He was the second representative sent from Ashfield. He married for his second wife the mother of Mary Lyon. Quite a number of his children went west. Jonathan, his son, lived on the old place many years and was the father of Mrs. Epaphroditus Williams and Miss Sally Taylor, afterwards the wife of Elder Pease. Isaac and Jasher came to town about 1771. In one of their prospective journeys here they stopped with friends in Hadley over night who desired them to buy land there, but the green wooded hills to the west were more attractive to them. Isaac settled on the farm just sold by Henry Taylor, and had four sons. Ezekiel and Stephen stayed on the farm. Ezekiel was the grandfather of Daniel, aged ninety-two, and Henry, aged eighty-four, now living here. Isaiah, the third son, settled in the northwest part of the town. Jeremiah moved to Hawley, and from his family

have come a large number of ministers. Jasher, the third original Taylor settler, moved to Buckland. He was the ancestor of Darius and Wells. Seven of the Taylors were in the Revolutionary war, and five were in the Civil war,—all from this town.

The name "Baptist Corner" came very naturally, owing to the Baptist church and all its associations being located there. The northeast part of the town, Baptist Corner and Beldingville, was considerably noticed in the Ellis book and a map made of the location of the early settlers. Some of the families not mentioned there will be noticed here. Jesse Edson came here from Bridgewater in 1771 and settled on the old road above Sidney P. Elmer's. The large rock near where he built his first cabin is still pointed out. He was a surveyor, the father of Howard, and great-grandfather of Mrs. Almon and Mrs. Chandler Bronson and Mrs. Joshua Hall. The Willis family lived a short distance above him. Timothy Catlin moved from Deerfield and lived where Samuel Hale does. He was a scarred Revolutionary war veteran. Was at Bunker Hill and at several other important battles and was wounded in the face. Israel and Miles Standish lived on the John Hale place where Frank Bailey now lives. The farm where Herbert Elmer lives was lot No. 28 and was bought by Roger Bronson from Connecticut before 1800. Several generations of Bronsons were born here. Samuel Elmer in 1773 bought two fifty-acre lots, Nos. 20 and 21, where George B. Church now lives. He was the ancestor of the Elmers living in this section.

Wardville was probably so called after Caleb Ward and his son Luther. Caleb lived at the east end of the Walter Lesure pasture, on what was once the main road to Buckland. Luther lived for many years where Joseph Tatro does. Captain or Esquire Phillips, as he was oftener called, lived across the road from Levant Gray's in a large two-story wood colored house. Capt. William Bassett settled on Captain Phillips' farm about 1825 and built a brick house there. Jonathan Yeomans built the Tatro house about 1796. Capt. Ephraim Jennings lived near

the poplar trees northwest of the schoolhouse. Marshall Lyon lived where Dana Graves does, selling to Dana's grandfather Ebenezer about 1830. This family of Graveses came from Reading to Charlemont in 1794 and were descendants of Samuel who settled in Lynn in 1630. Aaron Lyon, grandfather of Mary Lyon, settled in 1765 where Addison Graves lives. The Crittendens settled on No. 43, 2nd Division, where Freeman Barnes lives. Joseph Paine made his pitch where the Higgins boys live. He was the ancestor of Postmaster General Paine who was born in the Prouty house on the Plain.

Of the Harry Eldredge place, one Smead was the first owner known. Mr. Ranney hands down this tradition: Mr. Smead died and a man named Davis Butler was hired to carry on the place. After a time, finding the hired man was likely to marry one of the daughters, the widow broke up the match and finally married him herself. Dea. Samuel Bement owned the place quite a number of years before it was bought by Harry's grandfather, Mr. Allen Eldredge. Lebbeus Rood was an early owner of the farm owned by Clayton Eldredge. He probably built that house, and sold to Chester Sanderson in 1816. Senator Dawes married his wife here in 1844. The cellar hole in Clayton's pasture, about forty rods south of his house, marks the spot where John Ward, who tended the grist mill down in the ravine, lived.

The first record we find of the village being called the "Plain" is in 1815. In a paper read before the Farmer's Club at Professor Norton's house in 1893, Mr. Ranney says of Dr. Bartlett, who built the house a hundred years before, "When he came here in 1766, the settlers on the site of this village were Samuel and Jonathan Lillie, at the place afterwards Seth Wait's tavern, now the Episcopal rectory, and Capt. Moses Fuller and his son Nathan at the place where Moses Cook's dwelling is." Of the people who were here in 1793, he says, "It is probable that the following list of families comprises all or nearly all who then resided in this village, namely: Dr. Bartlett, Capt. Moses Fuller, Capt. John Bennett, Levi Cook, Esq., Zachariah Field, Samuel Clary, Seth Wait and Eleazer Smith. Five of the houses then



occupied are yet standing, namely: those now in possession of George Wright (Episcopal rectory), Mrs. Rosa Ranney, Prof. C. E. Norton, Henry S. Ranney and Mrs. J. C. Prouty." The Sanderson house was built by Dr. David Dickenson about 1798, was owned by Dr. Enos Smith in 1808 and soon after sold to the Sandersons, in which family it remained until the death of Alvan, when it was bought by Mr. Belding. The Esquire Paine and Esquire White houses were built in 1794. The Sedgwick lot was a part of the Bartlett estate, bought by James McFarland, sold by him to Charles Williams in 1816, bought by Dr. Enos Smith in 1825, and bought by Dr. Charles Knowlton in 1835. Dr. Smith also lived for a time in the house now owned by Amos Daniels, as did also his son-in-law, Dr. Atherton Clark. The Prouty house was moved from near where George Cook lives. George Ranney, grandfather to Henry S. Ranney, in 1798 built the house where Albert Howes lives. Later Samuel Howes owned the place for quite a number of years. Jesse, son of George, settled where Arthur Williams lives, selling later to his brother Joseph, who was killed in 1838 by the falling of a tree. The maple trees that adorn the street were set out about 1824, by the young men of the village—worthy forerunners of the present Civic Service Club.

The name "Steady Lane" is said by Mrs. Miles to have been given to this district because some of the people met so steadily to play cards at Captain Warner's store, which was near the schoolhouse. This district comprised a large area. David Williams settled on the place now occupied by F. H. Smith on land given him by his father, Esquire Williams. The settlement of the three farms south has been given in the Howes and Hall account. The next place south of Mr. A. G. Hall's was settled by Timothy Perkins, Jr., and Eliab, sons of the Timothy Perkins who kept the double log house tavern on the Plain. It is said that Lorenzo Dow once preached in the barn on this place. Elisha Bassett from Yarmouth settled about 1797 where Willis Turner lives. His son, Esquire Henry, later bought the place now owned by his grandson, Isaac. This place had been settled by Joseph Stocking who came here before the Revolution from



East Middletown, Conn. He had quite a family as did also his son, Abram. Of Abram's sons, only George remained in town.

The schoolhouse stood on the corner below where Allison Howes lives. Jacob Kilburn had a tannery across the road south from the schoolhouse. Captain Warner's store was nearly opposite Allison Howes' house. Jonathan Lillie in 1764 bought lot No. 61, 1st Division, with a house upon it. His wife was a Foster, her mother a Standish, descendants of Miles Standish and all from Stafford, Conn. In 1793, Lewis Foster, a relative, bought of Jacob Kilburn the north end of lot No. 60 which is directly east of 61 and is where Allison G. Howes, a great-great-grandson of Jonathan, now lives. Jonathan was grandfather of Alonzo Lilly, a successful business man of Baltimore and Boston, who has remembered his native town by generous donations to the Academy and Library. Lilliput Lodge, noticed in the Smiths, was occupied by Eliakim, son of Jonathan.

Elisha Wing was a son of Edward of Goshen who probably came from Warren. He came to Ashfield a little after 1800 and settled where the Wing place now is. He was a carpenter and did considerable work towards finishing the meetinghouse after the death of Colonel Ames. He was grandfather of the ten children of Elisha Wing, Jr. About thirty rods to the west lived Barnabas Alden who had seventeen children. Over the hill to the left lived Daniel Mighles, ancestor to Mrs. Charles Abbey, Henry Howes and Henry Fuller. Across the road was Nathaniel Clark, grandfather of Herbert. His father was Silas who had a log house west of Peter Hill, where Nathaniel probably was born. A hundred rods further west near the foot of the hill were David and Thomas Hall. Coming back from the hill we come to Clarence Hall's place which Esquire Williams bought of Joshua Whieldon in 1793, with house and barn. In 1800, he built the large house now standing. "Uncle Joe Fuller" lived opposite on the present Mrs. Guilford place and his father Josiah and his grandfather, Aaron, some thirty rods east. Lieut. Zebulon Bryant from Bridgewater bought before 1766 part of lot No. 26, 2nd Division, which is now the Tredick farm. He was grandfather of William, Chauncey and Calvin Bryant, and great-

great-grandfather of Dr. Ward C. Bryant of Greenfield. Silas Clark came down from the hill and built the house Fred Kelley lives in. His son-in-law, Chipman Lilly, lived with him. Jacob Kilburn of Chatham, Conn., moved here in 1774, and settled near the brook at the foot of the hill below Fred Kelley's. He was a tanner and cordwainer and was ancestor of Emory and Nelson of Greenfield. Some fifty rods south settled Jonathan Taylor, the first Capecodder coming to town. Going back towards the old schoolhouse, Jonathan Lilly, Jr., built the houses occupied by Dr. Jones and Robert Howes. George Stocking had a house and a tannery where the creamery is. Walter Shaw's house was moved down from the hill near Thomas Hall's and occupied as a hotel by George Barrus. There was a hall above where dances and singing schools were held. Flint Upton early lived where Mrs. Josiah Smith does and had a blacksmith shop opposite, which was changed into the Hathaway house. Chipman and Austin Lilly, shoemakers, Miss Amanda Amsden and others lived in the house owned by the Smiths. The Wright place was owned by Dr. Enos Smith in 1812. He also owned the land upon which the meetinghouse was built. Later it was occupied by Dea. John Bement, Justus Smith, Nathaniel Holmes and others. The gambrel roofed Smith house stood on the ministerial lot granted to Rev. Nehemiah Porter and was probably built by him. Capt. Justus Smith lived there afterwards and about 1850 his son Justus moved the addition on the rear of the house across the road changing it into what is now John Sears' house.

Down the new road from the creamery, at Bert Richmond's, we come into the South Ashfield school district, where lived Anson Goodwin who probably built the Bert Richmond house. Uriah Goodwin, his ancestor, came here from West Hartford in 1773. He had twelve children and his son, Eldad F., had eleven. Of these large families, only Anson remained in town. Opposite Mr. Goodwin once lived "Jo" Manning, the zealous Millerite elsewhere spoken of. A short distance below settled Benjamin Rogers, ancestor of Charles of Greenfield and others. Down the stream at the turn of the Briar Hill road was Dorus Graves,

busy at his clothier's shop. He and Sumner were from the Hatfield Graveses, probably not related to the Ebenezer family. On the Luther Guilford farm settled Samuel Allen from Deerfield. His father was killed by the Indians at the Bars fight in 1746. Young Samuel, then eight years old, was taken captive and carried to Canada where he remained about a year and a half when he was ransomed and brought back to Deerfield. He came here with other Allens before 1770 and bought this place. He was a lieutenant in the Revolution and captain of the company that marched from Ashfield to aid the Shays' rebellion. Before this his name often appears on the records as holding public office, but he was evidently disfranchised by refusing to accept of pardon as his name does not appear on the list of those who afterwards took the oath of allegiance. He probably retained some of his youthful grit for Mr. Sheldon relates that when captured, he kicked, scratched and bit so lively he excited the admiration of his Indian captor so much that instead of tomahawking him he resolved to carry him away. It is said he had pleasant recollections of his youthful captivity. He was remembered by the old residents here as "Barefoot Allen." He moved to Grand Isle, Vermont. One of his descendants was a representative to Congress from that state. He sold in 1794 to Samuel Guilford. Mr. Guilford had previously moved here from Spencer, married a daughter of Capt. Elisha Cranston of Spruce Corner and settled on the hill above the Bird place. He was the ancestor of the Guilfords now in town. The next place below has been mentioned as the old log hotel stand; the farm occupied later by the Waits and Nathan Sears. The house in which Charles Lilly lives was built by Bela Gardner, father of E. C. of Springfield; later occupied by John Ward, the miller. Heman Day moved from the Plain to the place now occupied by his son, Charles. He was a ready debater at the Lyceums, a strong democrat and a man of very positive convictions. Samuel Barber came over with his father from England and started a tannery just back of his house now occupied by Mrs. C. F. Howes. He was town clerk and representative to the legislature. He had a large family of whom only Mrs.

Henry Church and George M. of California are now living. A short distance up the stream on the other road, Eli Sprague had a small tannery. Opposite each other at the top of the hill east, lived David Howes and David Eldridge; later Esquire Bement, mentioned among the magistrates. On the Darwin Pease place lived one Bloodworth, also Peter Sears. Below, was Jasper Bement, afterwards the enterprising merchant on the Plain already mentioned. His son, Samuel, was a popular principal of a grammar school in Lowell for many years. Near the Blaksley place, perhaps at the Butler place, lived Horatio Bartlett, the mill owner; then Abner Kelley, Jr., for many years. Roswell Ranney lived where Sanford H. Boice does, selling the farm to Sanford's grandfather in 1832. Mr. Boice was from Blandford, married a daughter of Paul Sears, lived for a time in the northeast part of Goshen, then moved to Savoy, came to Ashfield in 1819 and bought his wife's father's farm where he remained until he purchased the Ranney place. They had twelve children, all of whom are dead except Sanford of Amherst. Russell Bement was an early owner of the Henry Pease place. The place below was settled by Archibald Burnet. The exodus of his family to western New York has been mentioned. Up stream near Guilford's mill was Elijah Field, the clothier. He was a much prized Sunday School teacher at the Congregational church. His son, Solomon, was a teacher and is now with his sons a prosperous farmer and seedsman in Iowa. Part way up the hill towards George Chapin's in the pasture to the left is the spot where Dea. Nathaniel Sherwin from Enfield, Conn., settled. His son, William, went to Buckland. William's son, William F., was a noted singing teacher in this section, afterwards musical director in the Chautauqua Assembly, and for a time professor in the New England Conservatory of Music. Many hymns from his pen are found in our sacred hymn books. The George Chapin place, as told on another page, was the town farm from 1839 until 1874 when it was sold to Luther Chapin, father of George and Arthur. His grandfather, Nathan, was one of the nine men sent up in 1757 to guard the fort around Chileab Smith's house. Nathan is the guard mentioned who

fell in love with Chileab's daughter, Mary, and married her in 1759. These Chapins are descendants of Samuel, whose statue stands on the Library grounds in Springfield. The Pease place north was lot No. 1, 2nd Division, and was bought by John Pease who moved from Enfield, Conn., to Conway in 1800, and to this place in 1811. He had eleven children. He was a common school and sacred music teacher. The brick house occupied by Wallace Whitney was built in 1821 by Samuel Ranney, son of George, who built the Albert Howes house. Alvan Hall, a successful farmer, occupied the place for many years. Going up the Briar Hill road from the Dorus Graves place, on the corner, opposite the George Ward place, lived Joseph Lillie, the man who brought back the town guns in Shays' time. Lewis Warren lived there later. The house occupied by Mrs. Underhill was probably built about 1790, by Solomon Fuller. He sold in 1808 to Joseph Barber. Joseph first settled in Savoy but soon got out of the town, saying he never knew a good cornfield fenced with spruce poles. His sons, John and Henry, built saw and wood working mills on the stream below the house. They had quite a genius for invention. Henry discovered the modern process for making lead pipe, but another party finding it out secured a patent before the discoverer. He also invented a useful device for a bit brace from which he gained some benefit. One of Joseph's daughters was the mother of George B. Church. About half a mile to the south up the hill on what is now the town farm lived Ebenezer Cranston, later his son-in-law, Elias Rogers. Opposite, settled Micajah Howes mentioned in another page as moving here from the "Edge of Hawley." Still farther up the old road, nearly at the junction with the new, on the left was the home of Elder Josiah Loomis. He married Susannah, daughter of Joshua Howes, who lived across the valley on the hill lot now owned by Mrs. Curtis on the old road then leading to the Plain. They had a large and somewhat noted family. Their son, Nathan, married Waite Barber, daughter of their neighbor, Joseph. Several of Nathan's sons were located in Washington, working in astronomical and mathematical lines. One of them



in the sixties, catching the spirit of prophecy, asked Congress for \$50,000 for experiments in wireless telegraphy. Eben was employed in the Nautical Almanac office there for twenty-five years. He was the father of Mabel Loomis Todd, wife of Professor Todd of Amherst College. W. S. Loomis, late President of the Holyoke Street Railway Company, is of this family. Susan Look Avery, a granddaughter of Elder Loomis, was the wife of B. F. Avery of Wyoming, N. Y., who with his sons were large manufacturers of agricultural implements with Louisville, Kentucky, as headquarters. Some fifty rods to the south settled Stephen Cross from Ellington, Conn. His first child was born here in 1779. Stephen was the grandfather of Alvan, and of Levant and William Gray and great-grandfather of Henry Cross. It is not known that he was related to the Crosses in the north part of the town. The Grays bought land here in the eighties and nineties. They came from Pelham and were of the "Worcester Grays," many branches of that name being in this country. It is said they looked over Amherst before settling, but decided on Pelham as there were more stones there to build chimneys with. In 1793, Robert, Jonathan and James were on the tax list. Jonathan was the grandfather of Levant and William and built the old house now standing south of the little Briar Hill schoolhouse. The valuation list for 1821 says he had four acres of upland mowing from which he cut four tons of hay, ten acres of fresh mowing cutting ten tons, twenty-eight acres of pasturage and a hundred and eighty-seven acres unimproved land. Elias Gray built the stone house at the foot of the hill about 1830. Some fifty rods farther on settled Joseph Blake who came from Hingham to Goshen in 1766 and from there to Ashfield in 1811. He had seven children, of whom only Silas stayed in Ashfield. Silas had, with other children, Dorus and Hosea, who built the two large houses now standing near each other. They were enterprising and successful farmers. In 1821, Silas is credited with owning more land than any man in town except Esquire Williams. Beyond the Blakes was Lieut. Jeremiah Mantor from Tisbury, then Nathan Wood, now the Ludwig summer home. Down the hill to the east,



past the Smith house, James Case, also from Tisbury, built the house now Miss Collis' summer residence. Nearly north from here ran a road to the C. F. Howes place on which lived Parsons Mansfield. Francis Ranney in 1786 settled on the Howes place, now the summer home of Professor Cockaday. Giles Ranney settled near where Herbert Church lives and was grandfather of Darwin, also of Mrs. Anna Bradford of Buckland. Northerly past the Francis Ranney house was Stoddard Nims and Simon Collins; still further down the hill on the old road was the Chapel schoolhouse at the Falls. Some one hundred rods to the east down the hill lived Alvan Clarke, the father of Alvan the famous telescope maker. He moved to Ashfield in 1794 and married Mary Bassett, daughter of Elisha, and sister of Esquire Bassett. He had ten children of whom Alvan, Jr., was the fifth, being born March 8, 1804. On the valuation books for 1817, Joshua Knowlton and Alvan Clarke were taxed for a grist mill they owned together. By the will of Alvan, Sr., Alvan was left a patrimony of fifty dollars, a small sum to begin life with. Those who knew him as a youngster spoke of him as a dreamy, absent-minded boy, not showing any particular talent when at school. However, he showed much interest in the mill. He says it was washed away when he was eight and he was so wonderstruck by the achievements of Captain Gates, the chief in the work of rebuilding, that he concluded he would be a millwright. When about seventeen, he went into his brother's wagon shop and worked a year. He had developed to a certain extent a taste for drawing and engraving and he says that he returned to the paternal mansion and put himself at work in good earnest to learn alone more of the art. In 1825, he secured work as an engraver for the Merrimac Print Works at eight dollars per week. In 1826, he married a daughter of Asher Pease, a neighbor living about half a mile just over the line in Conway. They settled down to housekeeping in Lowell, living there and in other places, gaining a livelihood by his trade and as a portrait painter. About 1844, he and his son, George Bassett Clark, then only seventeen years old, became interested in telescopes. After much investi-

gation they discovered the errors in the old telescopes and sought to correct them. A learned professor told Mr. Clark if he wanted to make telescopes he must go where they made them and learn how. But they persevered in their own way and finally produced a medium sized telescope of such power that new stars were discovered by it and their reputation was established in the scientific world. He and his sons were pioneers in first-class telescope making of a large size. Among the larger telescopes made by him and his sons, are the 20-inch for the National Observatory at Washington, the 30-inch for the Russian Observatory at St. Petersburg, the 36-inch for the Lick Observatory in California, and the 40-inch for the Yerkes Observatory of Chicago. The Lick telescope is claimed to be the best in the world. Alvan Clark died in 1887, and his son, Alvan G., in 1897.

Joshua Knowlton moved here from Belchertown and lived about half a mile north of the Chapel Corner. He was related to Dr. Knowlton, was the father of Friend, Madison and others. Friend remained on the old place. His sons were Nathan and Joshua. Nathan was on the board of selectmen for many years.

Apple Valley in the northwest part of the town was so named by Jonathan Johnson, for a long time connected with the *New England Homestead*. Zephaniah Richmond came from Taunton about 1790 and settled in a log house on the sand bank opposite where Frank Willis lives. He was ancestor of the Richmonds living in this section. Sandpaper was made on the place where Mr. Willis lives. Ziba Leonard bought the place above it of John Porter in 1808 and built a house on the knoll west of where Mrs. E. P. Williams lives. He sold the farm to Edwin Williams, Sr. Later the house was burned and Mr. Williams built the house nearer the road which was burned in 1910 and a new house was erected in its stead. The Clinton Wing farm had many owners, namely, Jonathan Alden, Isaiah Taylor, John Porter, Geo. Graves and others. Israel Williams had his house, cider mill, and still near where the schoolhouse is. The farmers from Buckland used to draw their apples up here and sell them for four cents per bushel. Israel Williams sold the place to

Hiram Richmond, who built the house in which Herbert Clark lives. Mr. Williams then bought the place where W. S. Williams now lives.

The name "Northwest" came very naturally, as it was in that part of the town. It was sometimes called "NobsCUSset" as most of the settlers came from a part of Yarmouth bearing that name. Ebenezer and Daniel Forbush lived at the foot of the hill below John W. Howes. Daniel has already been noted as the teacher and great fruit lover. He and his son, Frederick, afterwards moved to the W. S. Williams farm, then to the H. Clark farm, and finally to the Buckland farm where the grandson, Warren Forbes, now resides. In 1794, Joseph and David Vincent from Yarmouth came here, Joseph building the house where Charles Tatro lives and David settling half a mile west of Abbott Howes. Barnabas Howes, son of Kimball, lived near where John W. Howes does. The location of Mark and Ezekiel Howes has already been given. Daniel Sears, son of Enos, located about a half mile northwest of where David Vincent settled, on the farm lately bought of the Polanders by J. W. Howes and his brother. Daniel married the daughter of Moses Rawson, his next neighbor on the north. Beyond the Rawsons, in the edge of Buckland, lived the Roods and Nathan Howes, father of Mrs. Moses Cook. Quite a few from these families moved to Oak Creek, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where their descendants may be found. Returning to the corner, just over the hill to the west, in the pasture on the left now owned by Robert Howes, Forris Cranson had a log house. He was ancestor of the Cransons of Buckland. Some flat flagging stone was once quarried here. The Ezra Williams hotel, burned while occupied by the father of J. R. Smith, has been described. The long rows of maple trees by the roadside were set out by Mr. Williams. He spaced off the distance for just one thousand trees, but by a miscalculation it fell a few short of that number. About half a mile south on the right at the foot of the hill on the school lot was the place where Tim Warren was planted and asked to get a living for himself. Forty rods to the south on the left Barnabas A. Howes built a house about 1830. This was burned in 1877 while occupied by Joseph Keach.

There are two theories as to the origin of the name for the "New Boston" district. One is that it came from a locality on the Cape by that name; the other, that a young lady from the eastern part of the state, a relative of the Posters, while teaching one of the earliest schools there, kept in Capt. Kimball Howes' house, said that the place was so much like Boston that she was going to call it New Boston. When the post office was established there the change was made to Watson because there was another New Boston post office in this state. In the old records this part of the town and Spruce Corner was called West brook. Joseph Porter, son of Rev. Nehemiah, early owned considerable land in the west part of this district. His son, Nathan, lived where Lucius Hall now does. One of his sons, William Pitt, graduated from Williams College and was a successful lawyer in North Adams. He was law partner of Henry L. Dawes, afterwards United States Senator. Mr. Porter married a daughter of Dea. Alvan Perry of this town. Sumner Church and Thaddeus Rood were occupants of the two houses south. Seth Church built the house now occupied by Archie Jenkins. He was a son of Caleb. The registry records say that in 1785 Caleb Church of Oakham bought portions of lots Nos. 48 and 32 in 4th Division, one half of 22 and 52, 5th Division, also ten acres not then laid out. These lots were apart from each other and it looks as if he might have traded for them as boys sometimes swap jackknives "without seeing." He settled at first about half way from Spruce Corner up to the Lesure place in what is now Streeter's pasture, later moved up near the Lesure place. The son, Seth, was the grandfather of George B. and great-grandfather of Claude. His name appears on the list of selectmen, also as representative. The Anderson house on the opposite corner was said to have been built by Sylvester Davis who sold to Lemuel Eldredge, he to Francis Bassett, who lived there many years and raised a large family. Lyman Cross, afterwards the hotel keeper, built the Albert Lilly house and sold it to Emory Knowlton, a brother of the doctor. Samuel Lilly, father of Albert, lived here for many years. A short distance above lived Timothy Hammond who had a still. The William

Ford house was early owned by sons of Ezekiel Howes who sold to Joel Lilly, the father of Joel, Rufus and Oscar. Forty rods to the north on the left is the birthplace of Zebulon B. Taylor, who did the good work for the Northwest cemetery. About the same distance farther up the hill is the cellar hole of the house where Enos Howes had a large family. Half a mile to the east on the Bear Swamp road Barnabas Howes and sons built their house about 1850. William H. Howes lives on the farm which his great-grandfather, Capt. Kimball Howes, settled. Nathan Vincent was an early owner of the Ralph Phillips place, later the Bryants and Woodards. On the Lilly place above, once lived Granville B. Hall. At the top of the hill was Bethuel Lilly.

Henry Fuller's grandfather, Jonathan, moved from Haddam, Conn., to Lenox, from there to Hawley about 1785, where his son William was born, who came to Ashfield and settled the farm his son Henry owns. A hundred rods south on the right was the large two-story house built by Lucius Smith, occupied later by Addison G. Hall. The Lesure house was built by Asa Guilford. Jacob Gardner, before he went to South Ashfield is said to have lived near here. He was an ancestor of Charles (the lawyer) and E. C. Gardner of Springfield.

The name "Spruce Corner" came naturally from the abundance of spruces there.

Ephraim Williams was the first settler here in 1771. A notice of this is given under "Old Mills." A graphic account of his settlement is given by his nephew, Rev. Francis Williams, quoted on page 395 of the Ellis book. His mill was near the corner and the house a few rods to the north. Ephraim's son, Daniel, built a large brick house and in time his son Darius built a fine barn. They were considered the best farm buildings in town, but unfortunately all burned in 1885. Ephraim's son, Apollos, built the brick house where A. R. Streeter lives. Capt. Elisha Cranston lived on the corner opposite. Directly south from here to the Goshen line ran one of the four county roads. Within about fifty rods of the Goshen line settled Stephen Warren. His deed given in 1778 says, "land between Alder Meadow



and Grassy Meadow." He built a large two-story house which for a time was a hotel. He was a great-grandfather of Warren Forbes of Buckland. North of him were Lazarus Barrus, John Eldredge and Ebenezer Palmer.

On the hill to the west of the corner came Lot Bassett from Yarmouth about 1784. He was brother of Elisha, father of Esquire Bassett. He married a sister of Mark Howes and had ten children. Many descendants of this family are living in this vicinity. Elisha Bassett of Boston, for many years clerk of the United States District Court was a grandson of Lot. Three children, Lot, Samuel and Abigail were unmarried and lived and died on the old place. By economy and careful management they accumulated an estate which inventoried nearly \$100,000.

The settlers west of here, the Jenkins, Stetson, Beals, Ford, Packard, Dyer and Gurney families, nearly all came from Abington and vicinity about 1800. Lemuel Phillips, the third of Esquire Phillips' twelve sons, settled on the hill about forty rods southwest of where Harry Shippee now lives. He had eleven children.

Nelson Gardner, while living in this district, proposed to change the name to "Wyoming Valley," but the love of the old was too strong and "Spruce Corner" still reigns.

William Hawkes lived a few rods west of the Bassett place on the hill. With other boys he had a son Enos, whose son Clarence, born 1869, is now the well-known blind author, poet and lecturer, living in Hadley. When he was thirteen years of age, living in the southwest part of Spruce Corner, while hunting with his father in thick underbrush they became separated and when the father fired at a woodcock on the wing, the son received into his face the full charge of twenty-eight bird shot, completely destroying his eyesight. After trying in vain for two years to have it restored, he was sent to the Perkins Institute for the Blind where he remained four years, graduating as valedictorian of his class. He afterwards took a post graduate course. Mr. Hawkes has written much and his dozen or more books on animal life take equal rank with those of John Burroughs and Ernest Seton Thompson. It is



wonderful that a person with only thirteen years of the memories of childhood should be able to give such vivid descriptions of nature, and that with all his misfortunes he has accomplished so much in life. He says, "The three P's—Patience, Perseverance and Pluck have been my motto." Of his boyhood life here, Mr. Hawkes says:

I certainly have a warm spot for Ashfield and her people in my heart. Some of the pleasantest days of my childhood were spent there, and it was there while going and coming from the schoolhouse down at Wyoming Valley, and upon the farm, as well as on long tramps in field and forest, that I gathered all the fund of Natural History which has stood me in such good stead since.

Among other duties, I used to drive out to the Plain two or three times a week to get the mail, and lay in a supply of groceries. I can recall as though it were yesterday the beautiful scene from the top of the hill above Professor Norton's to the village below. When my old express wagon came rattling down the top of this hill it was usually about sundown, and the rays of the setting sun were falling aslant through the tree tops, gilding with finest gold the exquisite Florentine steeple upon the town hall, which rose majestically among the tree tops. How cool and restful, too, was the green vista of Ashfield village street, with its canopy of overarching maples and its well kept lawns, with its neat residences. Broadway, New York, does not appeal to my imagination nearly as much now, as did the pleasant country village of Ashfield to the mind of the country boy.

Professor Norton's place and that of George William Curtis always had a great attraction for me, for even at that early age I was a bookworm and was glad to do homage to these great geniuses in my small way. Little did I then dream that in later years Professor Norton would become a sympathetic and valuable friend to me.

The little white schoolhouse in Spruce Corner too, still calls to me with something of the old charm of childhood, but it can never be quite the same again, for while modern surgery can do wonders, yet it cannot put the heart of a boy back into the breast of a man of forty, especially if the man has traveled along the shady side of Life's pathway. Like Whittier's children in the school days poem, we were quick to leave our lessons and "go storming out to play." Our favorite playground was in Gardner's mill yard, or along the two streams that wound through

the broad green meadows behind the schoolhouse. I remember that as I sat in the back seat close to a window, I could always hear the low murmuring of the brook, inviting me to its fern fringed banks, and trout haunted pools, and calling me away from the intricacies of Colburn's Arithmetic.

My father and mother were Ashfield born. My grandparents upon the Hawkes side spent nearly all their lives in town, while my great grandfather was old Dr. Enos Smith of whom so many witty stories are told. So I feel like a scion of the Ashfield tree although I was born in Goshen.

Cape Street, so named because peopled mostly from the Cape, has been noted in another chapter. Thomas Tower settled some fifty rods this side of the Goshen line on the Lithia road. He moved to Florida, Mass., and the place was occupied by Allen Eldredge. Where M. T. Clothier lives settled Abner Kelley and near the summer house called "Journey's End" settled the Seldens. Elisha Parker made his pitch at the top of the hill on the left about forty rods south of the schoolhouse. He was the father of Rev. Samuel Parker who in 1835 crossed the Rocky Mountains on foot, and came home two years later by the Sandwich Islands. He wrote an account of his trip in a book of about 370 pages. A partial copy of this book was found with the Parker descendants and placed in the Ashfield library. An entire copy is in the old library at Northampton. On the "Paddy Hill" road leading from the Capt. Lot Hall—Jepson—now Dyer's house, to the Goshen line lived Eli Eldredge, Ebenezer Putney and Moses Belding.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MRS. MILES' AND H. M. SMITH'S REMINISCENCES

These Reminiscences were written by Mrs. Lydia Hall Miles after she had passed her ninetieth year, by request of her niece and nephew, Miss Julina O. Hall and Dr. G. Stanley Hall, also by others interested in Ashfield history.

My father was not a rich man and in order to support his large family must of course not only work very hard but practice also a strict economy. We never suffered for want of sufficient plain food but never enjoyed many luxuries, and for this reason grew up a healthy, happy family. In regard to clothing, not many dollars, and I might almost truly say, not many pennies were spent, for nearly everything worn by the family was of home production. For our summer wear flax was first needed. This was raised upon the farm and prepared for use by my father and elder brothers, then passed on to my mother who "hatcheled" it. The long finer part was then ready to be wound about the distaff and spun upon the little wheel which was propelled by the foot. This part of the work was done by my mother and older sisters and was for the warp of the piece. The tow, or coarser part, that which was separated from the finer portion by the hatchel, was carded by hand into what was called rolls, why so called I cannot say, for they were flat. My mother often carded a lot of them in the evening for the next day's spinning and laid a board on the pile, to keep them flat and firm; these were to be made into yarn by the younger girls. A girl of seven years was expected to spin seven knots per day; then the rest of the day might be spent in play. (A knot of yarn was forty times around the reel, each round measuring two yards.) This yarn from the tow was not so strong and was always used for filling. Our yarn next must be boiled in ashes and water to render it soft and pliable, then it must be thoroughly rinsed to remove every particle of ashes. We took ours to the brook, rinsing it in running water which saved us much labor. Our yarn was now ready to be converted into cloth. Then came the spooling, warping, beaming on, the thread carefully drawn through the harness and reed, the harness hung in the pulleys, the treadles rightly adjusted, the tow yarn wound on quills and placed in the shuttle, and we are ready to weave. Recollect, all

the cloth for family use is to be made, towels, table linen, bed linen, bags for grain, in short, everything.

This was scarcely finished before we must begin to prepare for winter. The sheep are sheared, wool for family use brought into the house to be cleansed, some to be dyed in the wool, and when properly prepared sent to the carding machine to be converted into rolls, which were spun into yarn. Some of this we dyed blue or any other color desired to make cloth for our winter gowns, or perchance for the fulled cloth for the clothing of the male portion of our family. Sometimes this part of our winter's outfit was colored at the mill "Butternut," "Snuff color," "London brown," blue or even black, but not often. The dyeing was usually done at home, to save expense.

When my eldest brother left home, at the age of twenty-one, he had never had a suit of clothes that was not of home manufacture and "made up" in our house. My second brother's first suit of "boughten cloth" was his "freedom suit." Some of our homespun we thought very nice, and think so still. Our best towels we were very proud of and like to show them even now. Then our blankets were fine, I have the remains of one of them yet and show it with much pride. I spun the yarn of which it was made, got in the piece, started the weaving myself, long, long ago. Could again do the same had I the strength. We also spun, colored the yarn for, and wove our stair carpet. It was a beauty, and for durability was worth several of such as we can buy at the present day.

All this meant labor; girls of my acquaintance seldom went to school in the summer after the age of thirteen. Their services were required at home. We did occasionally have a calico dress for church wear, and as we outgrew them, passed them on to younger members of the family. Mine, at an early age, were paid for in men's socks which were knit by myself; one pair of these would pay for one yard of calico. When this was purchased I was a very proud and happy girl.

Our house was small, without plaster or paint at the time of my earliest recollections, but after some years was plastered and painted on the inside, but never externally. After many years my father built a modern house, but not while my mother lived.

A man's wages at this time seldom exceeded fifty cents per day, even in haying; and six dollars a month was great pay. Still we lived on our farm in a small house in a small way. Our supper was usually bread and milk. Pork, beef and mutton were raised on the farm and if in autumn our supply ran short, a spring lamb or a chicken was slaughtered. Every family kept

geese; these were picked twice every summer for the feathers for our beds and pens from the quills. Plenty of corn was raised on every farm, also rye and oats and sometimes we raised a little wheat. I distinctly remember the first barrel of flour in our house; it was brought to our house from Albany by a teamster and it was on the road more than one day but it came and we had a whole barrel of flour. The man owed my father and could pay in this way or very likely we might not have been so extravagant as to buy such an amount at one time.

Our wheat when we had any, and our rye were carried to the mill, converted into coarse flour, fine flour, and bran. The fine flour was for pastry, and this was done by bolting. Our rye was only made into meal, which was much better for mixing with corn meal for our brown bread; this was baked in large pans in our brick ovens and was much superior to the brown bread made at the present day, for in baking the heat was greatest at the outset and gradually diminished as the baking proceeded. This bread, thoroughly baked, with butter, cheese, or even with milk was not to be despised. Our cheese found a ready market whenever we had more than was needed for home consumption. These were made during the summer. Very little butter was made in the hot weather, till many years later, when it was sent to Boston. Before this, ten or twelve and a half cents was paid for a pound, sometimes less.

I have done many a washing for a neighbor who was in need of some aid, received twelve and a half cents for the day's work and felt amply compensated. Nearly every family of my acquaintance did their own work, even if their means would allow them to hire. When help was needed no one wished to take advantage of those in need of assistance. No girl of that day would think of asking a dollar a week for her services, even if she worked from sun to sun. My older sister engaged to teach a school and "board around" and was promised seventy-five cents a week; but if she did well, she should receive five shillings instead. At the close of school she received ten dollars for the twelve weeks, for "doing well" and felt well repaid.

After providing food and clothing for the household, many other things must be looked after. Our houses must be lighted in some way during our long winter evenings and this was done by means of tallow candles. We first spin some tow with great care; it must be twisted only just enough to hold together, for if twisted too much we should get almost no light from our candles. This being rightly prepared, it was cut into proper lengths and twisted on the rods, a quantity of tallow was melted



and the "dipping" began. The first dip was the most important; after this was done, every incipient candle must be made straight; this required the pressing of the thumb and finger down each, rolling it carefully all the way down, then the rest was more easily done. One rod after another was immersed in the tallow till they were as large as desired. Sometimes this required many hours, as they must be cooled before the next dip, or, if too cool, the successive layers of tallow would not unite.

Soap making was very disagreeable and our small house was then in a very confused state. The male portion of our household were not unwilling to absent themselves from home at this time, as well as when a barrel of cider was boiled down for apple sauce, as was done every autumn. Women of that day stood in no need of devising means by which to amuse themselves or for exercise, perhaps a little too much exercise was required to provide for their families. But were people less social in those days? I trow not. My mind goes back to my childhood, when on many winter evenings the merry chimes of sleigh bells announced the coming of two or three of our remote neighbors for a long winter evening's visit. Were they invited? O no, they came for a good time, and then our near neighbors came in to add to the pleasure of all concerned. During the evening the hostess is expected to cook a meat supper for her guests. This is to be done in the open fireplace, as there was not at that time a cook stove in our school district; everything was cooked by the fireplace or in the brick oven. A kettle was hung on the hooks over the fire and when the water boiled the potatoes and other vegetables were added; next we wanted a good bed of coals on which to fry the ham or sausage, as well as coals for making the tea, and still another bunch to warm the mince pie. When all was in readiness the guests were called to the table, a blessing asked, and a more happy group you will not often meet. Our next neighbor (Nathaniel Clark) was of a happy, jovial nature and wherever he was there was innocent mirth and jollity.

Matches, now in daily use, the value of which we appreciate very little more than the air we breathe, were not known or thought of at that time. If, through any oversight or neglect, we had permitted our fire to go out, what was to be done and how make the fire? We go to our neighbor for a few coals, but if none could be obtained on our side of the hill—which sometimes did occur—we were in a dilemma indeed. If my father was at home, he, by means of two pieces of iron, struck fire, and every family was provided with a tinder box, then by striking, a spark was to fall on some tinder which was ignited, and a few



very thin shavings added, then larger ones with wood above on the andirons and thus started our fire. Another way of getting fire was by rubbing rapidly together two sticks of wood, one hard and the other soft, igniting them by friction. Sometimes my father got fire by means of his old flintlock gun; a little powder was placed in the pan, the lock snapped sending the flash upon the tinder. This state of things seldom occurred. My mother was usually the last one up in the house and was careful to see that a good bed of coals was so deeply buried in ashes that on raking them open a fire could be started at once.

Our huge fireplace was some four feet long and so deep that a log two feet in diameter was placed against the back, another half as large upon this, the andirons set against these and a fore-stick of good size upon them. A space was left between the backlog and forestick in which with great care small pieces of wood were placed, then underneath, the incipient fire was put and we soon had a roaring blaze pleasant to see. In the hot days of summer the backlog was omitted, and the fire being so far back in the fireplace, most of the heat went up the chimney and our houses were not more uncomfortable than at the present day. Ventilation was secured by means of the large chimney as well as by the many cracks and crevices about the windows and doors and in the unplastered walls. In 1840, we had our first cook stove with its elevated oven.

On our side of the hill there was no clock; and in my early years they were rarely found in farmers' houses. But every house had its noonmark; and our town, or rather church, bell was rung at noon and at nine o'clock in the evening. But on bright sunny days our parents could tell by the sun almost any hour of the day, and at night by the moon and stars, with the Almanac only for their guide. Sometimes my brothers wished to join their companions for an excursion at an hour or two before sunrise. My father though not an astronomer, by consulting the stars, would give the call at the right time. Having been obliged to observe the stars from youth he had become quite proficient and in a cloudless night could tell the hour almost exactly.

The old Steady Lane schoolhouse was built on a ledge of rock with the old chimney made mostly of unhewn stone laid up with mortar but topped out with brick. In the winter when the fire was roaring up the chimney a baker's dozen of children were standing before the fire, shielding their faces from the intense heat while those in the seats were shivering with chattering teeth and nearly freezing waiting their "turn" at the fire. In summer this

huge, rough, gaping fireplace was filled with bushes; oak bushes were preferred as their leaves did not wither so soon. The seats were on three sides of the room, the back seats commencing near the door and extending in one unbroken line around three sides of the house, the floor for these seats being two steps higher than the main floor. The second row was not continuous like the first but had three alleys, one in the middle and one on each side. Then came a seat across each side of the south aisle and lastly seats with no desks around the three sides. The schoolhouse was built in part by Elisha Wing, Sr. The seats were very high and on the front benches children could not touch their toes to the floor but studied with their feet dangling. It was a perennial joke that Uncle Elisha's legs were so long that he had naturally no idea how high a seat for a child ought to be. The entry extended across the house on the north with the rough chimney unconcealed. Stepping out of the door two or three feet away and nearly on a line with the house to the north was a huge boulder nearly as high as the eaves and more than half the width of the house. This rock was the favorite playground of generations of children. It was covered with a merry group as soon as "The playful children just let loose from school" could mount it. The last to mount was the catcher; then followed a merry game of which we never tired. Not far distant was another of the huge boulders, nearly as long but not so wide or so flat on top, indeed at the north end it was scarcely two and one-half feet high and seven or eight at the south end; this also was a favorite spot for us but far inferior to the "great rock." These rocks were blown to pieces when the new schoolhouse was to be built to the great regret of "ye olden time" pupils of Steady Lane. One of these old pupils, the Rev. Charles Porter of Boston, in his address at the Ashfield Centennial in 1865, termed the destruction of these rocks a piece of Vandalism. "That old rock" said he, "was my greatest help in getting an education." The old landmark is gone, and now nothing remains to show where rock or house once stood. Play, though an important factor, was not all we enjoyed at school. O, no; our games ended at once when the teacher, ruler in hand, appeared and rapped on the side of the door, which was a signal that we were wanted within. Then came our various lessons; we had no blackboards and each lad and lass came to the teacher's chair and was duly taught their a-b ab's, and to pronounce the same. When one lesson could be read correctly the next was taken, then lessons with three letters, and in process of time we came to the "Baker page" feeling very much elated;

and ere the summer ended were able to read in the "Readings." Our only reading book for a long time was "Webster's Spelling Book." With "Old Webster" and "Colburn's Arithmetic" which began with fingers and thumbs on our hands and by degrees took us to very abstruse questions at last, we were furnished with such knowledge as would enable one to do business very fairly. In our schools in the twenties, all were expected to attend to "the three R's;" further than this was elective. There were no regular classes in written arithmetic. When one needed help, the "master" was expected to render it, but it was given with as few words as possible. In writing our teacher must not only "set the copy," but also make the pens with which we wrote, from the quills of the goose. These were soon rendered unfit for use and must be mended, thus keeping him so busy that he was obliged to do two things at a time.

In our school, numbering anywhere from eighty to one hundred pupils, it could not be possible for the teacher to give any lengthy explanation. A teacher who fairly succeeded with such meagre equipments richly deserves praise and a grateful remembrance. Among my teachers, some who stand out prominently are Betsey Smith, Amelia Butler, Mercy D. Williams, and in after years, Wait Bement and Rev. Otis Fisher, who was not of the common order, but was a born teacher.

The next year we had "Adams' Arithmetic," but no blackboard and no regular recitations; still we made some progress. In addition we had "Goodrich's History of the United States." Now every alternate week we were to "write a composition." This, we felt, put us in the condition of the Israelites when they were to make bricks without straw, but it had to be done. One girl wrote of her troubles in coming to school; sometimes detained altogether by fierce storms and winds, again in passing almost insurmountable drifts of snow, then at last defeated by a "con-bominable drift."

I was now in the first class, in the back seat, the highest of all, reading in "Scott's Lessons" but still in "Webster's Spelling Book," for all were drilled in that book as long as they were members of the school. This winter I had "Blake's Natural Philosophy" added to my studies, but I liked my "Adams' Arithmetic" best. This was my last year of schooling in "Steady Lane," and indeed my school days were nearly past, for two terms in Franklin Academy at Shelburne Falls and one in Sanderson in my native town were all that followed.

In the spring of 1835, I went to Shelburne Falls and entered "The Franklin Academy." The village was then destitute of a

single church, but the first Baptist church was built that summer. Service was held in the chapel in the school building. There were scarce a dozen houses in the village at that time; no store, no manufactory save a shop where scythe snaths were made, a grist mill and tannery; a very quiet place, indeed. Most of the pupils boarded at the Mansion House with the teachers. Some roomed in the Academy building, as did also our good teacher, Rev. Otis Fisher. My boarding place was near the bridge, in the old "Shaker House," with seven others. At five o'clock the Academy bell rang, when all were to be in their places in the Chapel for prayers. One of the older students stood, pencil and paper in hand, to mark as absent any delinquent; and when school met for "Rhetoricals," the absentee was called upon to give reason for such absence. Frequently, we went back to our beds on our return, as our feet, and at times our clothes, were wet and we needed to put on fresh ones before breakfast at half past six. Then came our "study hours" in our own rooms; going to the Academy to recite at the appointed hour. The entire school never met but for prayers and "Rhetorical Exercises." We were not to leave our rooms during study hours but for recitations. Thus passed many happy days during two spring terms of '35 and '36.

At the close of this last term I was greatly surprised by being invited to take charge of the "South Centre" school of Shelburne. At first I demurred, but finally consented, if my good teacher, Mr. Fisher, thought me qualified for the place, which I doubted. With a favorite classmate, who had before made her début, I called on the august teacher and stated the case with fear and trembling. He listened, then seated himself, tore off a scrap of paper, wrote a few words and gave me, which I have to this day. He was chairman of the committee of Shelburne and this was my "Certificate." Soon I was installed teacher, with more than forty pupils of ages ranging from three to fifteen years, the dearest children, I soon thought, that the world had ever seen.

Thus commenced the teaching of "Aunt Lydia," which was kept up almost continuously for nearly forty years, most of the time in Ashfield schools. Thirty years ago it was said that a majority of the adult people then living in town had been at some time her pupils. She records that the next winter, not feeling fully prepared for her work as teacher, she remained at home assisting about the house and spending her leisure hours in study.

Early in the spring I was engaged to teach in my home district. This again was a school of over forty pupils, with ages from three to fifteen and from those commencing the alphabet to the class in United States History. Every minute of my time was filled, and nearly every day I found it impossible to hear all the lessons, so the older classes would wait until after school hours, usually until five o'clock. Three of my older pupils were afterwards college graduates. At the close of the term I received one dollar and twenty-five cents per week, nor did I feel aggrieved at this small sum, for some of the teachers had one dollar a week, but never again did I teach for so small a sum. The following winter I was a student in Sanderson Academy spending all I had earned in teaching, as I had my own bills to pay. I partly paid my tuition by teaching the advanced class in Arithmetic, and helping in some other ways. At the close of the term I took charge of the village school for six weeks, then engaged to return to my own district, but was to have one dollar and fifty cents per week for the summer of 1838.

The next year I had an early offer to teach at the "Round School" for two dollars per week which I accepted to the disgust of my home friends.

After teaching a winter school in Wardville, the spring of 1840 finds her back again in the "Round School" district. She speaks of this as being a very pleasant school. She notes that this was the year of the Harrison campaign and of seeing the wagon with its log cabin and barrel of hard cider and its load of Whigs cheering for "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," and singing the popular campaign song, with the chorus

"For I never will be a locofoco, locofoco,  
For I never will be a locofoco any more."

This wagon starting from Plainfield was on its way to the great Whig convention at Greenfield held in August of that year. Every loyal Whig on the route was expected to hitch his yoke of oxen to the string and jump aboard, cheering for "Log Cabin and Hard Cider," "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." A fine description of this gathering is given in one of Mary P. Wells Smith's charming books, I think in "Jolly Good Times at Hackmatack."

In May, '41, I went to New Boston and found the school room so crowded that it was difficult for those who wished to



write to do so. After considering the matter, I suggested that we come at eight o'clock when we could have the house to ourselves. The teacher was still obliged to make and mend the pens for the writers as steel pens had not yet made their appearance here.

After this, several terms followed in the Spruce Corner school. She says:

Here, as before, a house full of small children as well as young men and maidens greeted me. Every seat was filled, even the teacher's desk, but this mattered not as 'Teacher' seldom had a moment to be seated. The short winter days were not long enough to do all that seemed needful, so some who deserved more attention were invited to my boarding place for study in the evening. Sometimes we had an evening school at the school house, the parents often coming in with the young people.

The Reminiscences record the various schools taught, mostly in her own town, once as assistant at the Academy, many times in her own district, until 1873 when she taught her last school.

In 1875, she married Mr. Seth Miles with whom she lived about fifteen years. A few years after his death she left the village and went to live with her brothers and sister on the farm. Her sister Clarissa died in 1899, Orville in 1903, and Alvan, aged 98, in 1906.

We quote some of the words penned by her on the death of her brother Orville, words which those who knew him can appreciate:

He, who had all his life been the one to care more for others than for himself, was now laid away. His benefactions will never be known on earth. Did a poor boy wish to go to the Academy, his purse was open, tuition paid and sometimes something more was done in the case. "Let no one know," he would say. His motto was, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth." His life was a busy one. He served years in a number of public offices, and was public spirited in every sense of the word.

For her old mates and pupils she has tender recollections.

Of all the members of the old Steady Lane school contemporary with myself I know of but two who still survive, both now



living in Michigan. Most of my pupils have left life's busy mart, and gone to their final reward. One little red headed lad, whose smiling face was a pleasure to look upon, went West and all trace of him to me was lost. After years and years had passed he wrote me a nice letter from Minneapolis saying he had just heard by way of a friend that I still lived in my native town and that he was desirous of hearing from me. He had been prosperous, was a member of a noted firm in that city and was a useful member of society. These little "puffs" occasionally received are a source of gratification to a lone, garrulous old woman, for you know that I said at first I loved praise, and I like it still whether deserved or not.

A little further on towards the close:

Now Alvan and I alone are left; he an old man verging on a century, I over ninety, both feeling the weight of years. Even "the grasshopper is a burden," the few duties of the day arduous, the night very welcome. The sands of life are nearly run, memory impaired, "the grinders cease because they are few, they that look out of the windows are darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets." And now with only a wreck of our former selves, I cannot see what would be our fate were it not for the kindness of our many friends showered upon us almost daily, unworthy as we are. That the Giver of every good and perfect gift may reward them abundantly is the wish of my heart.

LYDIA HALL MILES died August 25, 1909, aged 92 years, 7 months, 10 days.

The following Reminiscences were written by Horace M. Smith for the benefit of his relatives, a few years before his death.

My grandfather was Chipman Smith and to the best of my knowledge was born and spent the early part of his life in Haddam, Connecticut. I do not know just when he was born, probably about 1760. His tombstone in Ashfield will tell. I do not know just when he moved to Ashfield. He married Mehetable Haskell who to the best of my knowledge was born in the town of Greenwich, Mass. In Ashfield they settled on "Peter Hill," the very top of it and the spot can now be located. They afterwards lived where Frank Howes now lives. There

they raised a family of six children with no deaths in the family till my grandmother died at the age of 77 years. My grandfather as I recollect him was of sturdy build and jovial disposition. My grandmother was smart and strong, resolute, interested in knowing all that was going on in the world, religious in her nature and an unfaltering believer in the doctrine of Predestination. She was known throughout the town as "Aunt Hitty." She was good company for both old and young and what she did not know about the Bible was not worth knowing. The young men of the town who were studying for the ministry, the Paines and Whites, took great delight in calling on "Aunt Hitty" to discuss "doctrinal points;" she could talk religion with the best of them, and was "a spectacle to behold" when she walked into the church wearing a red camlet cloak. (I think cousin Lávina has a piece of that cloak now.) I have a most loving remembrance of her, for within a little dirty tin cup she had a balm composed of mutton tallow, shoemaker's wax, and rosin which healed my sore toes when I was a little child, and I can never cease to worship her memory for the nice cup custards and the nice "piders" (pie dough) she used to give me every time she baked. She took snuff and grandfather smoked a pipe and both enjoyed it.

Their children were as follows: Annis, married Apollos Williams; Hannah, married Ebenezer Cranston; Justus, married Jerusha Montague; Lucius, married — Wrisley, Lydia Bassett; Chipman, married Rebecca Porter; Betsey, married Alvan Cross.

My father's name was Justus, born in 1791, on "Peter Hill" in Ashfield where he lived, and died in 1846. His education was limited, never going to school after he was seven years old. He was an honest man, a good farmer, respected and beloved by all who knew him. He was drafted for the war of 1812 and spent several months on "Dorchester Heights" (now South Boston) but never saw the enemy. He was made a Captain of the State Militia and was elected once or more to represent Ashfield in the State Legislature ("The Ginerall Court" as I was used to hear it called). He was frequently called upon to settle disputes between parties and his judgment was implicitly relied on in all cases when values or weights were to be considered. He took pride in raising the best crops and in having the best and fattest cattle. He would about once a year make up a drove of cattle, his own and those of his townsmen who had cattle they wished to dispose of, and drive them to Brighton market, and once I,

a very green boy of eleven or twelve years, went with him. We met a very poor market and stayed over a week in Watertown for a better one.

My father married when he was thirty years old and located in Ashfield where Mrs. Wright now lives, which place he owned at that time. There all his children were born in the southwest corner room. He continued to live there till I was four years old when he sold the place to Mr. John Bement and moved to the adjoining farm which he bought of Mr. Joseph Porter and there he lived and died. It nearly broke my little heart when I knew that I had to leave my birthplace. I well recollect the time of moving. It was winter, and I rode over to my new home on a sled by the side of the soap tub. I suppose I soon became satisfied with my new home as I have no recollections of any special longings to return.

My father and mother had six children only three of whom, Miranda, Justus and Horace, lived to maturity. My father was always kind and indulgent and always ready to do any thing within his means for the comfort and welfare of his children. We had everything we needed for our comfort, our home was one of love and peace; no wrangling, no scolding, no punishments; we had peace and plenty; our living was frugal but as good as any one had in those days. My father's farm contained a hundred acres and we raised plenty of corn and potatoes, wheat, buckwheat, fruit and "garden sass." We had an apple orchard of four acres and a cider mill in the yard back of the big barns, especially set apart for it when we made the cider for the town. For our own use we used to put in ten or twelve barrels of "winter apples," and ten or twelve barrels of cider, most of which was pretty thoroughly punished by the time we heard the creaking of the old cider mill again. Some of the apples nearest my heart were the "Seek no further" ("sig no feather" as I used to call it), the "Pig nose," the "Mall Tom" and the "Early Tree" to which I used to skip in the early morning to gather those which had fallen during the night. The season of apple picking was a joyous time to me. My recollections of the "Old Homestead" and all that occurred there are very vivid and interesting. In the winter we always had two large barns filled with hay, rowen and fodder of all kinds which was fed out during the long winter months to two or three or more pairs of fat oxen, two or three horses and colts, four or five milch cows, and more or less young cattle and sheep. In the summer it was among my duties to drive the cows to pasture in the morning and bring them back at night; pick up chips for the fire, and go to the

Steady Lane school, hunt hens' eggs, etc. In the winter I would help milk the cows, feed the calves and draw into the kitchen on my little sled plenty of wood to fill a big box by the stove with an elevated oven to keep us from being frozen.

However cold and stormy the weather might be, Miranda, Justus and myself scarcely missed going to school a single day. I remember with affection some of my early school masters, some of whom were Peleg Aldrich (who afterwards became Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts), Earl Guilford and Austin Burr, and I especially hold one of my school marms in grateful remembrance—Mrs. Lydia Hall (Miles). She was an excellent teacher and drilled into our youthful minds the rudiments of knowledge. She would have the school repeat the multiplication table several times every day. It was burned into our minds never to be forgotten. The school house was a rough specimen built by "Uncle Elisha" (Wing). It would seat about forty boys and girls and was well filled in winter in my boyhood. There were the Wings, Halls and Clarks from "Bug Hill," the Halls, Bassetts and Williamses from the North, the Williamses, Fullers, Bryants, Lillys and Kilburns from the South, and the Coles, Stockings, Putneys and Smiths from the East. I attended school in the Plain district one winter when it was kept by Henry L. Dawes, afterwards Senator. I also attended Sander-son Academy several terms under Dawes, Mitchell and Cooley.

There is one institution I must not forget to mention. It is the "Curfew," established before my birth and continued to this day. That same bell has been rung at 12 M. and 9 P. M. every day for more than seventy years. My father had the contract for ringing it several years and I myself have rung it for meetings, for funerals and all occasions. Our home was within twenty rods of the church. My father was not a professor of religion or a church member. He did not think he needed to belong to the church to make him a good man and citizen. The Golden Rule was his religion and he was as good as anyone in the town and as highly respected. He was accustomed to attend church once every Sunday (morning) and salt his cattle and sheep and care for them the rest of the day. We had a pew in the gallery of the old church and there I have had many a good sleep with my head on father's lap. The first minister I have any recollection of is "Priest Shepard." (All ministers were called Priests in those days.) He was very much beloved. The steeple of the "Old Church," the present town hall, has been very much admired for its symmetry. It is of the Christopher Wren style of church building in vogue in England centuries ago.

## CHAPTER XXII

### PRESIDENT G. STANLEY HALL'S BOY LIFE IN ASHFIELD

From a paper read before the American Antiquarian Society, published 1891, Vol. 7, pp. 107-128, "Boy Life in a Massachusetts Country Town Forty Years Ago," by G. Stanley Hall.

Between the ages of nine and fourteen, my parents, who then lived in a distant town, very wisely permitted me to spend most of the school-less part of these five years, so critical for a boy's development, with a large family on a large farm in Ashfield of this State. Although this joyous period ended long ago, the life, modes of thought and feeling, industries, dress, etc., were very old-fashioned for that date, and were tenaciously and proudly kept so. I have freely eked out the boyish memory of those five years with that of older persons, but everything that follows was in Ashfield within the memory of people living there a few years ago. Time allows me to present here but a small part of the entire record, to sample it here and there, and show a few obvious lessons.

I begin with winter, when men's industries were most diversified, and were largely in *wood*. Lumber—or timber—trees were chopped down and cut by two men working a cross-cut saw, which was always getting stuck fast in a pinch which took the set out of it, unless the whole trunk was pried up by skids. Sometimes the fallen trees were cut into logs, snaked together, and piled with the aid of cant-hooks, to be drawn across the frozen pond to the saw-mill for some contemplated building, or, if of spruce, of straight grain and few knots, or of good rift, they were cut in bolts, or cross-sections of fifteen inches long, which was the legal length for shingles. These were taken home in a pung, split with beetle and wedge, and then with a frow, and finished off with a drawshave, on a shaving-horse, itself home-made. These rive shingles were thought far more durable than those cut into shape by the buzz-saw which does not follow the grain. To be of prime quality these must be made of heart and not sap wood, nor of second growth trees. The shavings were in wide demand for kindling fires. Axe-helves, too, were sawn, split, hewn, whittled, and scraped into shape with bits of broken glass, and the forms peculiar to each local maker were as characteristic as the style of painter or poet, and were widely known,



compared and criticised. Butter-paddles were commonly made of red cherry, while sugar lap paddles were made by merely barking whistle wood or bass, and whittling down one end for a handle. Mauls and beetles were made of ash-knots, ox-bows of walnut, held in shape till seasoned by withes of yellow birch, from which also birch brushes and brooms were manufactured on winter evenings by stripping down seams of wood in the green. There were salt mortars and pig-troughs made from solid logs, with tools hardly more effective than those the Indian uses for his dug-out. Flails for next year's threshing; cheese-hoops and cheese-ladders; bread-troughs, and yokes for hogs and sheep, and pokes for jumping cattle, horses and unruly geese, and stanchions for cows. Some took this season for cutting next summer's bean and hop poles, pea bush, cart and sled stakes, with an eye always out for a straight clean whip stock or fish pole. Repairs were made during this season, and a new cat-hole beside the door, with a laterally working drop-lid, which the cat operated with ease, was made one winter. New sled neaps, and fingers for the grain cradle, handles for shovels and dung-forks, pitchforks, spades, spuds, hoes, and a little earlier, for rakes; scythes and brooms were home-made, and machines and men of special trades were so far uncalled for. Nearly all these forms of domestic woodwork I saw, and even helped in as a boy of ten might, or imitated them in play in those thrice-happy days; while in elder pop-guns, with a ringing report, that were almost dangerous indoors; hemlock bows and arrows, or cross bows, with arrow-heads run on with melted lead (for which every scrap of lead pipe or antique pewter dish was in great demand) often fatal for very small game; box and figure 4 traps for rats and squirrels; windmills; weather vanes in the form of fish, roosters or even ships; an actual saw-mill that went in the brook, and cut planks with marino and black and white Carter potatoes for logs; and many whittled tools, toys and ornamental forms and puppets;—in all these and many more, I even became in a short time, a fairly average expert as compared with other boys, at least so I then thought. How much all this has served me since, in the laboratory, in daily life, and even in the study, it would be hard to estimate.

The home industry in woolen is a good instance of one which survives in occasional families to this day. Sheep, as I remember, could thrive on the poorest hay, or orts, the leavings of the neat cattle. In summer they could eat brakes and polypods, if not even hardhack and tansy, and would browse down berry briars and underbrush, while their teeth cut the grass so close



that cows could hardly survive in the same pasture with them. The spring lambs were raised in the shed by hand, sometimes as cossets by the children, who often derived their first savings therefrom. Sheep washing day was a gala day when, if at no other time, liquor was used against exposure; and shearing, which came a week or two later, was hardly less interesting. A good shearer, who had done his twenty-five head a day, commanded good wages, seventy-five cents or a dollar a day; while the boys must pull the dead sheep, even though they were only found after being some weeks defunct. Fleeces for home use were looked over, all burrs and shives picked out, and they were then oiled with poor lard. "Bees" to do this were often held. Carding early became specialized, and carders were in every town, but the implements were in each family, some members of which could not only card, but could even use the fine, long-toothed worsted combs in an emergency. The rolls were spun at home, novices doing the woof or filling, and the older girls the warp, which must be of better quality. It was taken from the spindle sometimes on a niddy-noddy held in the hand, at two rounds per yard, but more commonly on a reel, in rounds of two yards each. Every forty rounds was signaled on a reel by the snap of a wooden spring or the fall of a hammer, and constituted a knot, four, five, seven, or ten of which (in different families and for different purposes) constituting a skein, and twenty knots making a run. Four seven-knotted skeins of filling, or six of warp was a day's work, though now, I am told, few young women can accomplish so much without excessive fatigue. The yarn, doubled if for stockings, after being washed clean of grease, next went to the great dye-tub in the chimney corner. Butternut bark for everyday suits, indigo for Sunday suits, and madder for shirting was the rule. There were also fancy dyes and fancy dyeing, braiding, binding tightly or twisting in a white thread to get the favorite hit-or-miss, or pepper-and-salt effect, a now almost incredible ingenuity in making up figures and fancy color effects for loom patterns in girls' dresses. Next the filling was quilled and the warp spooled, the former ready for the shuttle, and the latter for the warping bars (both of these latter being often home-made), to which it goes from the scarn or spool-frame. In warping, the leese must be taken with care, for if the order of the threads is lost they cannot be properly thumbed through the harnesses and hooked through the reed, and are good for nothing but to make into clothes lines and the piece is lost. A raddle also acts in keeping the warp disentangled and of proper width before the lathe and tenters

can hold it. Sometimes blue and white shirt-formed frock cloth was woven, sometimes kerseys and plaid dress patterns of many colors, or woolen sheets, and even woolen pillow-cases, which were as warm and heavy, although coarser, than those the ol-factorial zoölogist Jæger advises, and sells to his followers. The complication of harnesses and treadles required to weave some of the more complicated carpet, and especially coverlid patterns, evinced great ingenuity and long study, and is probably now, although the combinations were carefully written down, in most communities a forever lost art. On coming from the loom the cloth was wet for shrinkage, and the nap picked up with cards of home grown teasels and sheared smooth on one side, although in those days this process had already gone to the local fuller. Coarse yarn was also spun from tag-locks, which was, of course, home carded. Knitting was easy, pretty, visiting work. Girls earned from two to three York shillings a pair for men's stockings, paid in trade from the store, which put out such work if desired. Shag mittens were knit from thrumbs or the left-over ends of warp. Nubias and sontags were knit with large wooden needles, and men's gloves, tidies, and clock stockings with ornamental open work in the sides were knit with one hook, and the tape loom held between the knees was kept going evenings.

Domestic flax industry still lingers in a few families. The seed was sown broadcast and grew till the bolls were ripe, when it was pulled and laid in rows by the boys and whipped, in a few days, to get the seed for meal. After lying out of doors for some weeks till the shives were rotten, it was put through the process of braking on the ponderous flax-break. It was then swingled, hatchelled, and finally hanked. It was then wound on the distaff made of a young spruce top, and drawn out for spinning. Grasshopper years, when the fibre was short, this was hard, and though ticking, meal bags and scratchy tow shirts could be made, finer linen products were impossible. After weaving it must be bleached in a good quality of air.

However it was with adults, child life was full of amusements. Children were numerous in every neighborhood, and though they were each required to be useful, they were in early years left much to themselves and were at home in every house, barn, or shed, within a mile or more. There was, of course, coasting, skating, swimming, gool, fox and hounds, and snow-balling, with choosing of sides, lasting for a whole school term, with elaborate forts; cart wheel and men o' morn's in the snow; collar and elbow, or square hold wrestling, with its many differ-

ent trips, locks and play-ups—side and back hold being unscientific; round ball; two and four old cat, with soft yarn balls thrown at the runner. The older girl-boys spent the hour's nooning in the schoolhouse and either paired off for small games or talks, or played "Here we stand all round this ring," "Needle's eye," "Kitty corners," or "Who's got the button." As in the age of Shakespeare the queen's maids of honor played tag, so here all children, and even adults often played child's games with gusto. In the family, as they gathered about the stove, or sometimes about the grand old fireplace in the back kitchen, with its back-log, crane, pot hooks and trammels, there were stories of the old fort, of bears, wild cats, Indians and Bloody Brook, and other probably unprinted tales perhaps many generations old. There were some who could sing old English ballads that had come down by tradition, and which had never been in print in America, and more who could sing a comic song or pathetic negro melody. Lord Lovel, Irving, Bunyan, *The Youth's Companion* and many Sunday-school books were read aloud. A pair of skates was earned by a boy friend one winter by reading the entire Bible through, and another bought an accordion with money earned by braiding the plain sides of palm-leaf hats where no splicing was needed, for the women at a cent per side. All families allowed the game of fox and geese, a few permitted checkers, and one, backgammon, which was generally thought to be almost gambling; dominoes were barely tolerated, but riddles, rebuses and charades were in high favor by old and young, and were published in all the local weekly papers. It was here that I learned that card playing, which I had often seen before, but did not much understand nor care for, was very wrong, and a boy friend was taught old sledge, and euchre, up over the horse sheds on Sundays between services, by an older son of the officiating minister. There were hull-gull; cats-cradle with two series of changes; string and knot puzzles; odd and even, and most of the games, and many more than those in Mr. Newel's charming, and largely original, book entitled, "The Plays and Games of American Children," connecting many of them conclusively with the sports and pastimes of the English people in the merry olden time of Brandt. One maiden lady, whom we all loved, could spell "The Abominable Bumble Bee with his Head Cut Off," in an inverse House-that-Jack-built fashion, with a most side-splitting effect. There was the charming story of the big, little and middle sized bear, and I recall the thrill when at the turn of the story, "the dog began to worry the cat, the cat

began to kill the rat, the rat began to eat the corn," etc. There were beech- and chestnutting parties; raisings; and days set apart for all the men in the district being warned out by the surveyor to gather and work on the roads with teams. Work was easy, as it was for the town, and stories were plenty. There were huskings, with cider and pumpkin pie, and games on the barn floor, when it was cleared of corn; paring bees, with bobbing, swinging a whole paring thrice around the head, thence to fall on the floor in the form of the fancied initial of some person of the other sex; and counting seeds to the familiar doggerel—"One I love, two I love, three I love I say, four I love with all my heart, and five I cast away," etc. Here the apples were quartered and strung, and hung in festoons to dry all over the kitchen. There were quilting bees for girls about to marry, where the men came in the evening and partook of the new species of rice pop-corn, served in two large milk pans, with, perhaps, the most delicious home-made spruce and wintergreen beer. Spelling schools in which the parents took part, and where the champion spellers of rural districts, after exhausting several spelling books, agreed to spell each other down on an abridged Worcester's dictionary. There were weekly evening singing schools in winter, and several of us taught ourselves or each other to play the accordion, and fiddle by rote, to dance single and double shuffle on a board, and the steps of waltz, polka and schottische. Even square dances were attempted to our own music, if we could get a caller-off. This latter was here a stolen sweet, as was the furtive reading of the thrilling tales of the *New York Ledger*, especially those of Sylvanus Cobb, sets of which were smuggled around among the boys and read after retiring, or in sheep shed, hay mow, or attic, on rainy days. I must not forget the rage for trapping and hunting, by which we learned much of the habits of crows, hawks, muskrats, woodchucks, squirrels, partridges and even foxes, and which made us acquainted with wide areas of territory. In a regular squirrel hunt organized by choosing sides, and a dinner to the victors paid for by the vanquished party, as determined by counting tails, boys of my age were not old enough to participate. We made collections, however, for whole seasons, of heads, legs, wings, and tails, as well as of woods, leaves, flowers, stones, bugs, butterflies, etc.

The dull days in haying time brought another sort of education. The men of the vicinity strolled together into a shed, and sitting on tool bench, grindstone, manger, wagons, chopping blocks, and hog spouts, discussed crop prices, ditching, wall-



ing, salting cattle, finding springs with witch hazel, taxes, the preaching, the next selectment, fence-viewer, constable, and, I suppose a little earlier, wardens, leather sealers, deer reeves, surveyors of shingles and clapboards and of wheat, field drivers, tithing men, clerk of the market, and pound-keepers, as well as the good brooks and ponds for trouting, or snaring pickerel with brass wire loops and a white-birch-bark light at night, and every sort of gossip. The old uncles who came to be the heroes of current stories, and who were, in a sense, ideal men, were shrewd and sharp, of exceeding few words, but these oracular, of most unpromising exteriors and mode of speech, with quaint and eccentric ways which made their quintessential wisdom very surprising by the contrast; while in weather signs and in drugs the old Indian was sometimes the sage. At the opposite extreme was the unseasoned fellow who can be fooled and not get the best of it if he was "run" or played some practical joke. Absurd exaggerations told with a serious air, to test the hearer's knowledge or credulity, were the chief ingredients of this lowery-day wit. Thus the ass's head was not unfrequently clapped on some poor rich fellow, green from the city, or some larger town, suspected of the unpardonable sin of being "stuck up."

In this air a good "nag" has great viability. As a boy here, *e. g.*, I often played hunt, snapping a disabled old flint-lock musket at every live thing in field and forest, for which an adult neighbor\* used to "run" me unmercifully before the whole shed. Years after, when I was at home on a college outing, he had not forgotten it, and for perhaps a dozen summers since I have met it. On a recent evening, when walking with a dignified city friend, he met me with the same old grind, "Hello, huntin' much this summer with Philander's old gun?" as he slapped his thighs and laughed till the hills rang, and, though I did not hear him, I am no less certain that he said to the neighbor with him, when they had ridden well by, that I was always a pretty middlin' good sort of a fellow after all, and wasn't stuck up. The joke will no doubt keep fresh another quarter of a century if my friend lives, and there are many more of the same kind. Another grind at my expense illustrates the inventive cleverness of this old Yankee type. As one of the speakers at an annual dinner in honor of the old town Academy, I had been several times introduced as a specimen of the former students of the Academy. One night, at the crowded post-office, this shrewd old farmer told, in my presence

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\*William Bryant.

and for my benefit, the story of old Joe W., who went on the road as a drummer for the old tannery. He said Joe had just experienced religion, and was just then so all-fired honest that he selected, as the samples he was to sell from, pieces of sole leather a trifle below the average quality, instead of above, as an honest drummer should do. He was afraid to hope that Professor N., who presided at the dinner, had experienced religion, but leastways he was so all-fired honest that he leaned over backwards worse than old Joe in calling me out as a sample Academy boy, for although I was middling smart there was not a boy of them who wasn't a plaguey sight smarter than I was. Another of his stories was of Stephen and Ann. They were courting, and she had sat in his lap in the kitchen one Sunday evening for some hours, when she suddenly asked if he was not tired. He gallantly replied, "Not a mite, Ann, keep right on settin'. I was awful tired an hour ago, but now I am numb." That is the way he said it was probably with my hearers and pupils.

Then there was the story of old Deacon S., who sold home-made cider brandy or twisted cider, at the rate of twenty-five cents per gallon, but who always used to get his big thumb into the quart measure, which had lost its handle, displacing its cubic contents of brandy. There was another tale of Captain A., who being cheated in a horse trade by Mr. B., called all his sons and grandsons together solemnly, as if for family prayers, told them the circumstances, and enjoined them to cheat B. back to the amount of six dollars, and if they did not live to do it to teach their children and grandchildren to cheat his descendants to the end of time; but a few months later, after another trade with B., the captain convened his family again to say that the score had been paid with interest, and to release them from the covenant. There was the story of Uncle G., who began his courtship by "creepin' in, all unbeknown," behind his best girl, stealing up close behind her as she was washing dishes, hat on and chair in hand, with the salute, "Well Sal, feel kind 'er sparky to-night?" to which she coquetishly but encouragingly replied, "Well, I reckon p'raps a *leetle* more sorter than sorter not;" and how at last, the minister being away, they rode together on one horse twenty miles alone, and were married. There was the legend of old Squire V., who used to be a great favorite with the girls. Driving up to the town clerk's door one day he told him to have him "published" the next Sunday with Miss B. and drove off. Soon he returned and desired the name changed to Miss C.,



and finally, after several changes and some minutes of profound deliberation, settled on Miss H., whom he married. There was the tale of the turning of the Deerfield River by the two great but mystic ancestors of one family in town. It once flowed down the gap in Mr. P.'s pasture, through the pond and over the plain of the village, and was stipulated as the northern boundary of the possessions of these pioneers. They were ambitious, and had noticed that new settlers and their depredations followed rivers, so they hired hundreds of Indians to dig with sharpened sticks, day and night, one entire summer, till the stream at length washed over down a more northerly valley so suddenly as to sweep away the dusky maiden beloved by one of the pioneers; with many other romantic incidents. There was the story of the old horse jockey G., who in his travels found a negro of great strength but so simple as to agree to work for him a hundred years, on the expiration of which time the old jockey was to give him all the property and serve him a century; and who cured him of the inveterate habit of sucking eggs by showing him a dozen, apparently freshly laid, in his bed one morning just after he had risen, and frightening him out of the practice by convincing him that he had laid the eggs while he slept. There was the story of the old cat ground up in the mill with dreadful caterwaulings, and of the two bushels of good rye required to grind the mill-stones clean again. Another, was of the case, famous in history, of the non-conforming Baptist deacon who would not pay his town tax to support the Congregational preaching, and whose apple trees were dug up by the constable and sold for payment; of the Deacon's going to Boston to the General Court, and of his return with a barrel of cider brandy drawn on two poles strapped together, one end of each in the hold-backs and the other end dragging on the ground. There were stories of a noted lady pioneer in the cause of female education, who solicited domestic utensils and produce of every kind for a young ladies' seminary, following the men into stable and around hay mow in her quest; of old Nightingale, suspected of witchcraft, who lived apart and was buried outside the cemetery; of old Sloper, who had no friends, and vanished so mysteriously that gradually a detailed story of his murder by a prominent, but not beloved, citizen was evolved; of the old church, stone cold in winter, with two services and sermons from ten to four, and in summer with the rocks black at nooning with people, mostly members in close communion, eating their Sunday dinner, and picking caraway or meetin'-seed; of the

waste of timber, or the greed of individuals in shacking hogs on the then extensive undivided land or common, and even of the secular variations of the compass to account for the disparity between the old surveys of boundary lines and new ones.

Evenings in the kitchen were spent in light work and gossip unremitting. Candles, in olden times before cotton, it is said, were made by loosely spinning tow-wicking. Candle rods were then whittled out or cut from cat-tails, on which wicking for a dozen candles was put, and they were hung over the back of an old, high, straight-backed chair tipped down, and dipped every few minutes in beef, or better, mutton tallow melted in the tin boiler. Of course candles grew faster on cold days, but were more likely to crack. Good iron candlesticks were rare, and at balls and parties potatoes were used, and wooden blocks. The evolution, I have heard, was first a "slut" or linen rag in fat, or a bowl of woodchuck's oil with a floating wick through a wooden button. Later came a square strip of fat pork with a thin sliver of wood thrust through to stiffen it and serve as a wick. Fire could still be made by friction of wood in an emergency. The best-raked fire would sometimes go out, and then fire must be borrowed from a neighbor. Those who wished to be independent obtained tinder-boxes with flint and iron, smudged tow and punk. Home-made matches, with brimstone and saltpetre, would catch readily, but friction matches were a great novelty. One of these friction matches, also home-made, of spruce lumber, by the boys, was "drawed" by their incredulous father, who, when he found it would really go, put it carefully in his pocket for future use.

The ideal hearth and fireplace of olden times (restored at Plymouth, and especially at Deerfield, Mass., by George Sheldon) was indeed the centre about which the whole family system revolved. On the swinging crane, evolved from the earlier wooden lug-pole, hung from pot-hooks, chains and trammels, several species of iron pots and brass kettles, in front of a green back-log, so big and long that it was sometimes snaked in by a horse. Below, attached to the upright part of the andirons, was the turnspit-dog, revolved by hand, and sometimes, at a later date, by clockwork, for fancy roasts. There were roasters and dripping pans, and the three-legged spider, in which bread was baked, first on the bottom and then, tipped up to the coals, or else the top was done by a heavy red-hot iron cover. Here rye used to be roasted and mortared for coffee, which was later boiled in water and maple molasses. On the shelf or beam above the fire stood the foot stove, a horn

of long and another of short paper lamplighters; a sausage stuffer; tin lantern; mortar; chafing dish; runlet; noggin; flatirons, perhaps of new fashion, hollowed for hot iron chunks; tinder-box; tankard; and coffee pots; and high above all a bayoneted flint gun or two, with belt, bayonet sheath, brush and primer. Overhead on the pole hung always a hat or cap on the end, and perhaps a haunch of dried beef, with possibly a ham, a calf's rennet stretched with a springy willow stick inside; pumpkins cut into long ringlets; bundles of red peppers; braided seed corn and dried apples, the latter also perhaps half covering the roof and south side of the house. About the fireplace stood or hung the bed-warmer, the tongs, and long "slice," a hollow gourd or crooked-necked squash; candle holders with long tin reflectors; bellows; woolen holders; toasting irons; smoking tongs; pewter porringer; spoon moulds; trivet; skillet and piggin; a tin kitchen; a tin baker and steamer; a flip iron; the big dye tub always in the corner, and the high-backed settle in front. Near by stood the cupboard, displaying the best blue crockery, and the pewter, kept bright by scouring with horsetails (*equisetum*); sealed measures, and a few liquids, and perhaps near by a pumpkin Jack-o'-lantern, with an expression when it was lighted in the dark as hideous as that of the head of an Alaskan totem-post.

The grandma was both nurse and doctor, and the children had to gather for her each year a supply of herbs. Chief among these were pennyroyal, tansy, spearmint, peppermint, catnip, thoroughwort, motherwort, liverwort, mugwort, elecampane, opodeldoc, burdock, mayweed, dogweed, fireweed, ragweed, pokeweed, aconite, arnica, scratch-grass, valerian, lobelia, larkspur, mullein, mallow, plantain, foxglove or nightshade, osier, fennel, sorrel, comfrey, rue, saffron, flag, anise, snakeroot, yarrow, balmony, tag alder, witch-hazel, and blood-root. Each of these, and many more, had specific medicinal properties, and hung in rows of dried bunches in the attic, and all grew in Ashfield. In Mr. Cockayne's "Leechdom, Wort-cunning and Starcraft," a remarkable collection of Anglo-Saxon medical prescriptions, I have identified the same symptoms for which the same herb was the specific, showing how this unwritten medical lore, as Mr. Mooney calls it in his interesting pamphlet, survives and persists unchanged.

The attic floor was covered a foot deep with corn on the ear, to be shelled winter evenings by scraping across the back of a knife driven into a board; the cobs being fed out to stock, or used for baking and smoking fires. Here, too, were tins and

boxes, and barrels of rye and barley, and, later, oats, wheat and buckwheat. In the corner stood, or hung, perhaps, a hand-winnower, a tub of frozen cider apple sauce, an old hat and wig block, a few woodchucks' skins to be made into whiplashes, a coon skin for a cap, a hand-still for making cider brandy or twisted cider. So, too, the cellar, shed, hog-house, barn, sheep and horse barn, sugar-house and corn-house, were stored with objects of perennial interest to boys.

The "sense of progress," which a recent psychological writer calls a special, though lately evolved, sense, was by no means undeveloped. Men loved to tell of old times, when maple sap was caught in rough troughs made with an axe, and stored by being simply turned in their places; to show the marks on old maple trees, where their grandfathers tapped by chipping with a hatchet and driving in a bass-wood spout made at a blow with the same iron gouge that prepared for its insertion, and to describe how, later, the rough unpainted tubs with unbarked hoops and, because smaller at the top, so hard to store and carry, and so liable to burst by the expansion of the ice on freezing, were superseded by the Shaker pails. The old days when sap was gathered by hand with a sap yoke, and stored in long troughs and boiled out of doors in a row of kettles on a pole or crotches, were talked over, with complacent pity, perhaps, while modern pans on a new arch and in a new sugar-house were kept going all night during a big run which had filled every tun and hogshead, while the best trees were running over.

Hour-glasses, especially to spin by, and dials, were sometimes used, and there were many noon-marks at intervals over the farm. In many families, even where coal and kerosene stoves are used, along with wood, oven-wood is still cut for the old brick oven, which Christmas time, at least, if not once every week or two through the winter, is heated, and then swept out with a wet birch broom. First, the rye and Indian bread is made up in a bread trough and then put on the broad, meal-sprinkled peel, with hands dipped in water to avoid sticking, and very dexterously thrown in haycock and windrow shapes, perhaps on cabbage leaves, on to the bottom of the oven. When this was done it was still so hot that pies could be baked, and last of all, a bushel of apples was thrown in and the week's baking was over. Many could then tell of the time when, with pudding or mashed potatoes and milk for the meal, no table was set, but each took a bowl of milk and helped himself from the kettle on the stone; or again, the family gathered about the well-scoured table, with no individual plates or



butter knives, or waiting on the table, but each took a slice of bread and helped himself from the meat dish, or dipped the brown bread into the pork fat with forks. Wooden, pewter, then earthen plates, was the order of evolution. So, in the dairy, milk used to be set in wooden trays, then in thick, brown earthen bowls, before the modern milk-pans came into vogue. The evolution of the skimmer from the clam shell, through a rough wooden skimmer; of churning, from a bowl and paddle on to the old dasher churn; of straining milk, from the linen rag strainer, up; of bails, from the ear and peg fashion, on; the history of the artistic forms of butter balls, and the stamps used; the very gradual development of the scythe-snath, which no artist ever represents correctly, to the present highly physiological and very sharply discriminated forms, as well as of the hoe and pitchfork; why are not these and the growth of the corn-sheller, hen-coop, plough, mop, the story of the penstock, the broom, from a bush or bundle of twigs, up through the birch broom with fibres stripped both up and down; of window transparencies, from the hole and oiled paper, etc., as scientific anthropological themes, as the evolution of the fish-hook, arrow-head and spear? Why is not the old soap-making process, with the lye, strong enough to support an egg, dripping from the ash barrel on the circularly grooved board or stone, and the out-of-doors boiling and basket straining, etc.; why is not the old-fashioned semi-annual geese-picking day, with the big apron, great vase-shaped goose basket, and the baby's stocking drawn over the goose's head to keep it from biting; why is not cheese making, when the milk from three families was gathered in a big tub, coagulated with a calf's rennet, broken up into curds and whey by the fingers, scalded, chopped, salted, perhaps saged, hooped, turned, and pared of those delicious curds, and daily greased all summer; why is not the high festivity of road breaking in winter, when all the men and oxen in the neighborhood, often twenty yokes of oxen in one team, turned out after a long storm and blow to break out the roads which the town had not discontinued for the winter, to church, stores, doctor and school, when steers were broken in, sandwiched between the yokes of old cattle, where often up to their backs in a drift, with a sled to which ploughs were chained to each side and a dozen men and boys on it, they could only wait, frightened and with lolling tongue, to be shoveled out; why are not the antique ceremonies and sequelæ of butchering day, and the fun and games with pluck and lights and sausages, which city-bred boys were told, and

said to believe, are caught like fish; the process of making pearl-ash and birch vinegar; cider-making; the manifold summer beers and other domestic drinks, etc., quite as worthy of investigation, of illustration in museums, as the no more rapidly vanishing customs of savage tribes?

At the place and time of which I write many domestic industries were more or less specialized. Farmers' sons often went away to learn trades. Broom making, *e. g.*, was the evening occupation of one member of the family I knew, and I saw the process of planting, breaking, tabling, hatchelling, for the seed was worth about the price of oats, bleaching with brimstone in a big down cellar, etc. Tying was the most interesting process. It included arranging the hurls, braiding down the stalks on the handle with wire, pressing in the great vise, and sewing with a six-inch needle, thimbled through by leather palms. I was allowed to sandpaper the handles, and once, in a time of stress, when a man was making forty plain Shaker brooms per day, even to put on the gold leaf. The local tanner allowed us to run among his vats, and see the hides salted, pickled, washed and limed, and, best of all, skived over the big beam. Last summer this tanner told me he believed his eighteen months in tanning an ox hide and the six weeks required by modern chemical methods, represented about the relative durability of the two leathers. His trade has lasted on, despite such competition, because his townsmen have something the same idea. Within boy-range, too, was a cooper's shop, a gunsmith, a family who made baskets, a small carding mill, turning shops where wooden spoons, bowls, sieve rims, pen handles, plain broom handles, etc., were made, a general tinker and solderer, besides carpenters, blacksmiths, shoe and harness makers. Some farmers specialized more or less, in sheep; others in young cattle, or pigs and horses. Some were always lucky with corn, others with rye or wheat, buckwheat, potatoes, grass, etc., to which they had mainly settled after much experiment, or to which the traditions of the farm or family inclined them. Thus, in fine, there were many grades of progress and versatility. Many of these old home industries I can still practice and have added to them by "lessons" in Germany. All come handy in the laboratory. I know I could make soap, maple sugar, a pair of shoes, braid a palm leaf hat, spin, put in and weave a piece of frocking or a rag carpet, do crude carpentry, farm and dairy work, and I envy the pupils at Tuskegee who can do more of these things and better than I.

I have alluded to but few of the occupations of these people.



Their commonest industries—planting, fertilizing, gathering each crop—have been revolutionized by machinery and artificial fertilization within twenty-five years. These, and their religion and beliefs, and domestic social customs, methods of doing their small business, are all fast changing. The women are haggard and worn with their work, the men are sometimes shiftless, and children are very rare. The heart of these communities has left it, and only the shell remains. The quaint, eccentric characters that abound in these towns, types of which may be found faithfully depicted by Mary E. Wilkins or in Mary B. Claflin's "Brampton Sketches," or in a few of the sketches in "Profitable Tales," by Eugene Field, are for the most part types of degeneration well recognized by alienists and characterized by Morel. These are quite different from the no less rustic characters in De Gaspe's "Old Canadians, or the work of Du Pray's School." Life then and there, although perhaps a century or more later than that described in the books of Alice Morse Earle, did not differ much from it. Did the earlier generations work too hard in digging stumps and stones, and laying the hundreds of miles of heavy stone wall and clearing the timber? Were the conditions of life too severe? Is our race not adapted to the new conditions of climate, soil, water, and, as Dr. Jarvis said, is it still a problem whether the Anglo-Saxon race can thrive in its new American home, or is this but an incident, an eddy in the great onward current of progress? I have no answer, but I know nothing more sad in our American life than the decay of these townlets.

Nowhere has the great middle class been so all-controlling, furnished so large a proportion of scientific and business leaders, been so respectable, so well combined industry with wealth, bred patriotism, conservatism and independence. The farm was a great laboratory, tending, perhaps, rather more to develop scientific than literary tastes, cultivating persistency, in which country boys excel, if at the expense of versatility. It is, says Professor Brewer, the question with city parents what useful thing the children can do; while in the country, where they are in great demand on the farm they are, in a sense, members of the firm. Evenings are not dangerous to morality, but are turned to good account, while during the rowdy or adolescent age the boy tendency to revert to savagery can find harmless vent in hunting, trapping, and other ways less injurious to morals than the customs of city life.

Some such training the heroes of '76 had; the independent conditions of communities like this was just the reverse of that

of the South at the outbreak of the Rebellion; such a people cannot be conquered, for war and blockade would only drive them back to more primitive conditions; and restore the old independence of foreign and even domestic markets. Again, should we ever have occasion to educate colonists, as England is now attempting, we could not do so better than by reviving conditions of life like these.

I close by mentioning an interesting new educational experiment, as a bright spot in this sombre present, which was somewhat feebly but happily tried in Ashfield, as a result of the recently awakened interest in its own antiquities. A prominent citizen, once a teacher, has studied from sources largely unprinted the history of the town, which connects it with the Revolution, and even the French and Indian wars, and on the lines of an old map he has made of the original town surveys, gave an hour per week during part of a winter in teaching history, from a local standpoint in the little academy, with its score of pupils, and adding many of the antiquities such as this paper has referred to, with free use of the museum, and all with excellent results. A village pastor, who is an excellent botanist, took the class a few times each year on excursions, and the older girls have gathered and pressed for him in a school museum all the Ashfield plants and grasses, on the basis of which he taught a little botany gratuitously. The Doctor coöperated with them and talked on physiology and hygiene, and brought his microscope and other instruments. A student of an agricultural college has gathered all the Ashfield rocks and minerals and taught geology. He has gathered cabinets of the local animals, birds, eggs, butterflies, and insects, which a summer resident makes a basis of some instruction. A summer boarder was drafted in to teach drawing to all comers half a day per week. This experiment, in what I consider coöperative education, begins at home, with what is nearest and often despised. The local Faculty about the teacher give but little time, but their teaching is full of interest and stimulus. They strengthen the teacher whom they really guide, and bring home and school nearer together. This new curriculum is without expense, and altogether may prove a suggestive novelty. To-day old domestic industries of the age of the tinder-box and stone milk pan and niddy-noddy are taught by a specialist to history classes from the city schools in turn, by Miss H. B. Merrill, in a central museum of American antiquities in Milwaukee.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PHYSICIANS, SECRET SOCIETIES, ETC.

A large number of physicians have practised in the town; of these the first was Dr. Phineas Bartlett, who is mentioned in the town records as early as 1766, and who remained in practice until the time of his death in 1799. After visiting a patient he fell from his horse and died in a fit. In 1793, he built the house now occupied by Professor Norton's family. He was largely identified with public affairs, represented the town in the General Court, was town clerk a great many years and filled other positions of responsibility. His sudden death was greatly lamented.

A contemporary of Dr. Bartlett was Dr. Moses Hayden, who was in practice in 1766, and perhaps earlier. He lived at South Ashfield, was in practice about fifteen years, and removed to Conway.

The next physician was Dr. Francis Mantor, a relative of Dana Graves, who was in practice at the close of the last century. Dr. Enos Smith probably came next, and was in practice many years. He lived on the Plain where Amos Daniels now lives, also at the Miss Sedgwick place, later, on the "Flat." About the same time as Dr. Smith, Dr. Rivera Nash engaged in practice in the town. Dr. David Dickenson was also here contemporaneously with Drs. Smith and Nash.

Dr. Cornelius Luce was in practice about 1810 for a few years, and lived at the north end of lot No. 18, probably in the hollow near the old mill. Dr. William A. Hamilton followed a little later. Then came Dr. Atherton Clark, who married a daughter of Dr. Smith, and first engaged in practice in the town about 1816. He also lived where Amos Daniels now resides, and was in practice many years. William S. Clark, a former president of Amherst Agricultural College, was a son of Dr. Clark.

Dr. Jared Bement also married a daughter of Dr. Smith, and engaged in practice in 1830-33. He resided where Albert Crafts, Jr., now lives. Dr. Charles Knowlton and Dr. Roswell

Shepard were in practice about the same time,—the latter for a few years only. They were in partnership for a time. Dr. Knowlton remained in town and died in 1850.\* He lived in what is now the Sedgwick house, and his office was near where the Flower house now stands. He was succeeded by his son, Dr. Charles L. Knowlton, who removed to Northampton in 1868, where he died in 1898, and was buried in Ashfield with his family.

Dr. Bement was succeeded by Dr. Milo Wilson, to whom he disposed of his business about 1838. Dr. Sidney R. Brooks, a native of Buckland, bought the homestead and practice of Dr. Wilson in 1845. He remained until 1855. While here he built the two houses now occupied by Joseph Green and Hugh Wing. He married a daughter of Dea. Asa Sanderson.

Dr. Stephen W. Tabor studied medicine with Dr. Knowlton about 1840, married his daughter, and practiced here a few years. He went to Shelburne Falls, then to Independence, Iowa, where he became a judge. He was afterwards appointed auditor in the Treasury Department at Washington.

Dr. James R. Fairbanks, a native of Pittsfield, subsequently engaged in practice in Connecticut, succeeded Dr. Charles L. Knowlton in Ashfield in the spring of 1868. He remained in town until 1879, when he sold out his residence and practice to Dr. Geo. R. Fessenden, a graduate of Harvard, who had practiced in Plainfield a short time before coming here.

Dr. John E. Urquhart, a graduate of Maryland University, came here in 1887. Both Fessenden and Urquhart still remain in town, each having a large and lucrative practice.

Other physicians have been in town for a short time. A Dr. King was in practice for about two years in South Ashfield, and a Dr. Lee died in town in 1816, after a short practice.

Dr. Enos Smith was here probably longer than any other physician. He was a graduate of Dartmouth, was considered not only a good physician but a man of excellent business ability.

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\*The only living descendant of Dr. Knowlton is a granddaughter, Mrs. Dora Knowlton Thompson Ranous, now engaged in literary work in New York City.

He was sent as representative five times and served as state senator. He was a man of large physique, with a strong voice and a quick and sharp repartee. He had a good practice, but his pent-up energy reached outside of his profession. He owned a large amount of land at times and quite a flock of sheep. During the fine wool craze he paid \$200 for a merino buck with which to improve his own and the stock of the town. Many stories are told of his peculiarities. Being called to see a patient in a critical condition, while holding the pulse of the sick one, the husband and others of the family waiting in breathless suspense, he suddenly broke silence by saying in his quick, sharp voice, "Esquire White, have you seen my new merino? One of the finest sheep in the state, sir. Call up and see him some day, sir." Another of his side enterprises was the starting of a small grocery when he lived in the house now occupied by Mr. Daniels. Going into the cellar one day to fill a jug with molasses, he received a hurried call from above. As it was cold weather the fluid ran slowly and he left it to answer. It proved to be an important case where a doctor was needed at once, and forgetting the matter below, he promptly obeyed the summons. Later, on returning, he thought of the molasses and going into the cellar found the jug full, the barrel empty, and the cellar bottom thickly covered with the sticky substance. The doctor ejaculated, "It don't pay for a man to have too many businesses, sir. Ready to sell the grocery at once, sir." He liked at times to go out among his hired men to enliven the labors of the field himself. One afternoon he went out to load the hay on a wagon. In his characteristic way of wanting matters to move lively, he began to call, "More hay, sir, more hay, sir." Soon coming to a place where the tumbles were nearer together the pitcher threw the hay up so fast the loader could not take care of it, although still crying, "More hay, sir." Finally, his quarters becoming so contracted, he slid to the ground. "Doctor," said the pitcher, "what are you down here after?" "More hay, sir," was the reply.

One of his daughters married William Hawkes, and was grandmother of the blind writer, Clarence Hawkes, also great-grandmother of Rev. Albert Howes of Fitzwilliam, N. H.



Dr. Charles Knowlton was born in 1800 at Templeton, Mass., married in 1821 and graduated at Hanover Medical College in 1824. He began practice in Hawley at "Poverty Square," then a thriving village, and moved to Ashfield in the early thirties. He was a "free thinker" and was outspoken against the stern theology of the day. The Congregational minister and a portion of his church were very bitter against him for his belief and also because of a book he had published, believed to be injurious to the morals of the community. A portion of the church favored the doctor and the result was a serious schism in the church. He was esteemed a skillful physician and had a very large practice. After his death, his son Charles L., who had begun practice in the town of Worthington, was induced to return to this town. He was here about eighteen years, when deeming the long and hard rides too much for his health he decided to remove to Northampton. A good story is told in connection with this removal. A petition was circulated requesting him to remain, and obtained a large number of signatures. It so happened that one of the men most active in circulating the petition was the town undertaker, but nobody saw the joke until he presented it to the doctor, who said at once, "I suppose you thought it would help your business for me to stay in town."

Dr. Shepard mentions that during the length of time he kept the death record about 50% died of consumption. By consulting the death record of the past ten years and summing up all the lung and throat diseases under different names which formerly might have been called consumption there is probably now less than 15% instead of 50.

We find mention of only two cases of small pox in town. In 1824, Simeon Wait, who had been on a peddling trip to York State, returned home sick with the disease. He was confined in an old house which stood on the hill about a hundred rods south of the Farragut house, where he died. His solitary grave may be seen in the mowing lot below the road leading to George Ward's house. In 1850, a daughter of Mrs. Marvin Williams, who lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Prouty at the east end of the street, came home from Springfield sick with what



was called measles but proved to be the small pox. Several people were exposed and two other families lived in the house. The town spent \$223 in trying to prevent the spread of the disease and in aid to the family. Passengers in the stage objected to riding past the house, so it was obliged to go up the Norton hill and down the Goodwin road past the hill cemetery. Mr. Albert Crafts says that one evening, as a tenant of the infected house came into the front of the store, two other villagers who were sitting by the stove quickly made their escape through a back window. The patient died and was secretly buried in a corner of the old cemetery. Fortunately there were no more cases.

In 1867, a strange epidemic of typhoid dysentery prevailed among the children at Beldenville in the northeast part of the town. Thomas Kelley lost all his children, three boys from three to sixteen, within a week. Stephen Sears, his next neighbor, lost a boy and girl of fifteen and nine, and Alonzo Eldredge, a boy of nine, leaving the three families childless. Clark Bardwell also lost a five year old boy, making seven children in one small neighborhood in the space of about five weeks.

#### SECRET SOCIETIES

December 23, 1826, a Masonic Lodge was organized in this town by Rev. Titus Strong of Greenfield, meeting at John Williams' tavern. Rev. Orra Martin was chosen Master, Horace B. Childs, Senior Warden, Samuel P. Fuller, Junior Warden, Roswell Ranney, Treasurer, Jonathan Lilly, Jr., Secretary, Salmon Mather, Senior Deacon, Horace Cole, Junior Deacon, Austin Lilly and Luther Ward, Stewards, Seth Hall, Tyler, and Samuel Lee, Marshal.

The Lodge was removed to Conway in 1830, and after a few years the charter was given up, but upon petition, it was restored again in 1869, forming the present Lodge which now exists there.

The Master of the Ashfield Lodge was a Baptist minister at South Ashfield, and it seems that the church in the north part

of the town differed from their ministerial brother, as the following records on their books show:

April 25, 1827. After consulting about the Freemasons, voted that it is a burden to the Church that any of its members should be of that order.

At a church meeting, June 25. Voted again, that it is a grief for any member to belong to the Freemasons. Five members including the Elder, voted that they have no fellowship with the Freemasons.

August 27. We find that many things creep into the Church hurtful to the minds of some; one in particular concerning the Freemasons, which causes uneasiness for a member to join that order; and as there is some of that order who are members of our Church, we view it as a duty, as a body, to let it be known throughout the Church, that we think it will be for the union of the Church and for the honor of religion, for those members of the Masonic order not to meet with the lodge, to the grief of their brethren, which if they do, they may expect it will cause a labour if not a discipline with them. And, if any member hereafter should join the Freemasons, knowing that it is a grief to the Church, it should be considered just grounds for the Church to excommunicate them.

The Anti-Masonic feeling, caused by the disappearance of Morgan, was very strong about this time.\*

The secret organization called the Native American or Know Nothing party formed here in 1853 has been spoken of on another page.

A Grange was organized here in January, 1875, with A. L. Richmond as Master and Levi Gardner, Secretary, soon afterwards succeeded by Emory D. Church who apparently filled that office during the life of the organization. There were evidently over fifty members, but the records ceased in less than three years and its charter was surrendered to the State Grange. It is said one reason for its early death was the failure of their coöperation plan, as a small store which they had started proved a losing venture. In 1900, another Grange was organized, or rather the old one was revived, and has been success-

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\*The masters' gavel used in the old Ashfield Masonic Lodge is preserved in the Conway lodge.

fully carried on for ten years. There are at present about a hundred and twenty members.

#### THE SHAKERS IN ASHFIELD

In his Historical Sketch, Dr. Shepard speaks of the "vagrant religious fanatics called Tremblers" being in the North part of the town in 1781. The old records would indicate that they were here one year later. At a meeting held February 7, 1782, it was voted, as Dr. Shepard quotes, "That the selectmen be requested to warn said straggling Tremblers now in town and those that shall come in hereafter to depart in twenty-four hours or expect trouble." At an adjourned meeting March 19, a Committee of Safety was chosen and then it was "Voted to instruct the above selected committee to warn the Straglin Quaquars to depart the town immediately." Mr. Curtis and Rev. Mr. Huntington were greatly interested in this old record and as to who these "Tremblers" or "Straglin Quaquars," as they were called in the record, were, and Mr. Curtis proposed to investigate, but he died soon after. Subsequent investigation found that the oldest people knew but little of this sect. Mr. Erastus Elmer, over ninety years of age, had heard his mother speak of their living on the old road east of the Samuel Hale place in Baptist Corner, also on the locust knoll south of the house where Samuel Hale now lives. An old well is there which has always been called the old Shaker well. Mrs. Abram Shippee and Mrs. Samuel Hale, Sr., confirmed this account. Mr. Elmer said they were presided over by a woman called the "Eleck" (elect) lady. Some thought she was a witch. Mr. Marcus Parker said his father and his neighbor, Uncle Abner Kelley, went from Cape Street over to Baptist Corner, some six miles, to attend one of their meetings. Said that "when the meeting got well a-going, most everybody shook, but father didn't shake."

The records of the old Baptist Church in March, 1782, give the names of a number of persons who were "rejected by the church," and their names are found afterwards on the lists of those joining the Shakers from Ashfield. Of the origin of this

sect and the length of their sojourn little could be ascertained here, but from histories and from old Shaker books the following is gleaned:

In 1770, "Mother" Ann Lee became the head of the Shaking Quakers in England. In 1774, with a number of her leading followers, she emigrated to the United States. In 1776, they settled in Watervliet, near Albany, starting a religious colony there. In May, 1781, Mother Ann with three elders and two female friends started on a missionary tour to the east. They entered Massachusetts at Sheffield; then passed over the mountain into the town of Enfield, Connecticut, where by the Shaker account they spent a week teaching and preaching, and though threatened with violence by the "ungodly" they finally proceeded on their way unmolested to the town of Harvard, Mass. Here and in the adjoining town of Shirley they remained through the summer, where as the Shaker records say, "They spared no pains day or night teaching and instructing the people." It is evident they gained quite a following there and there was much opposition, so much that in January they were forcibly driven from the town and proceeded to Enfield again, where after a brief stay and making unsuccessful attempts to hold meetings, they were driven from the town. They then crossed the river, went up to West Springfield, recrossed the river, briefly visited a few believers in Granby and Montague, then passing on to Ashfield "tarried at the house of Asa Bacon."

There is some confusion in the Shaker accounts, some saying they arrived here in March, but the town record plainly shows they were here in February. "Here," the records say, "they were away from the claims of riotous mobs, and the retreat seemed like a great blessing of God."

The two votes of February 7 and March 17 were not very thoroughly carried out, for the Shakers record they did not leave town until the 20th of May. They then returned to Harvard and stayed until September when they were driven from the town with violence, several being whipped and one having his arm broken. They visited various towns in Connecticut, including Enfield where they were again mobbed while

attempting to hold meetings, and left there, finally, about the first of November, bringing up at Ashfield again, "where by invitation they accepted a home at the house of Asa Bacon where they remained until the following spring." Here they held meetings through the winter, also at Shelburne Falls at the house of Jonathan Wood, a three-story house that stood just back of the present hotel. It was afterwards called the "Old Shaker House" and was torn down in 1854.

The Shaker accounts of the meetings held are apparently exaggerated. They say "At one meeting at Asa Bacon's there were sixty sleighs and six hundred people—counted by John Farrington, by Mother's order." The meetings are described, "Great manifestations of the power of God and great purging among the people."

In March there was evidently a determination to clean out the disturbers, for the Shaker accounts say that a mob of fifty came over from Shelburne headed by Col. David Wells and met a delegation from Ashfield headed by Capt. Thomas Stocking. They convened at Chileab Smith's tavern just north of the corner above Houghton Smith's. They wanted "Mother" to go with them to Phillips' tavern near the center for a hearing, probably because Mr. Phillips was the leading justice in town, but his house was not a tavern near the center. It was a private house standing nearly opposite to where Mr. Levant Gray now lives. The town records give Captain Stocking as one of the constables that year. The Shaker account goes on to say that after a conference at the tavern, a committee was chosen, one of whom was Mrs. Smith and Colonel Wells another, and this committee proceeded to the house of Asa Bacon for the purpose of interviewing the "Mother." A full report of the conference is given in the Shaker "Testimonies" with the conversation between "Mother" and the Committee which represents "Mother" as having decidedly the best of the argument, and ending with a sharp reprimand from her. The result was that the "mob" departed without any "riotous demonstrations." The last of April, 1783, they left town.

Some of the parting words of Mother Ann to the people of



Ashfield are thus recorded: "It is now spring of the year and you have all been taught the way of God; and now you may all go home and be faithful with your hands. Every faithful man will go forth and put up his fences in season, and will plow his ground in season, and will put his crops into the ground in season, and such a man may with confidence look for a blessing."

The Shakers proceeded from here to Harvard, from which place they were again forcibly driven in July. They then slowly wended their journey towards York State, endeavoring to hold meetings on the way, but in almost every instance they were broken up by interference of the inhabitants.

Mother Ann died at Watervliet, September 8, 1784, aged forty-nine.

Is it not to the credit of Ashfield and Shelburne that they were thus tolerant toward these people who were so sorely abused elsewhere?

A more extended account of the Shakers in Ashfield may be found in a paper by F. G. Howes read before the P. V. M. A., February 23, 1909, and now on file in the Transactions of that Society, Vol. V.

#### MILLERISM IN ASHFIELD

Ashfield did not escape the tide of this sect that spread over the land in the forties. There are people living in town who well remember the visits of lecturers and itinerant preachers for the purpose of proving the speedy destruction of the world. They had meetings over Mr. Jasper Bement's store, also in the town hall where by means of charts and a blackboard they proved to the satisfaction of those who were disposed to believe it, that the world would certainly come to an end soon, and they obtained quite a little following here. Later, exact dates were fixed for the event, and a goodly number of the faithful had ascension robes prepared. It was even said by some of the irreverent outsiders that there was quite a discussion among the believers as to the material, cut and size of the garment to be worn on the occasion, and not a little envy that some had richer robes than others. A story is told of Uncle Joe Manning, the



whitewasher of the town, also a zealous Millerite who lived in a cabin with about an acre of land nearly opposite Mr. Anson Goodwin, who lived where Albert Richmond now does. Mr. Goodwin was a thrifty farmer, kept everything neat and trim about his premises, and his neighbor's somewhat untidy estate across the way was a constant eyesore to him, and he often tried to buy him out, but without success. On the day before the date fixed upon for the closing drama, Mr. Goodwin wended his way across the road to his neighbor and the following conversation is reported: "Well, Uncle Joe, they say the world is coming to an end tomorrow." "Yes, the world's coming to an end tomorrow sure." "Really sure about that, Uncle Joe?" "Sartin sure, never was more sartin of anything in my life." "Well, you are going away and don't want it, suppose you give me a deed of that piece of land this afternoon." "Ah, but the good Lord he say, 'Occupy, occupy, till I come.' " Uncle Joe kept his land until death, and the Millerites, frequently disappointed in their dates, lapsed into Second Adventism, and finally disappeared from town.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### ASHFIELD SUMMER RESIDENTS

In 1890, at a gathering of the students and others connected with the Academy, the following paper was read by a person who had just before heard from Mr. Norton's own lips his account of his "Discovery of Ashfield."

About twenty-five years ago on a bright day in June might have been seen a traveller driving along the valley road from Shelburne Falls to this town. To gain the stranger's acquaintance at once, we may say he was a professor in one of our principal colleges and an editor of one of our leading magazines, that he was in search of some quiet, pleasant village among the hills, where he might establish a summer home for himself and family. He stopped for a short time in Buckland, then journeyed on toward Ashfield. There had just been a refreshing rain, and the country was at its best. The air was clear and bracing and full of the song of birds, the flowers were in full bloom by the roadside and the hills were clothed with resplendent green. As he approached the village the quiet little lake by the highway mirrored back the beauty of the clouds, the hills and the trees. As he tells the story, he stopped at the modest little tavern in the village and partook of an excellent dinner. He took a walk through the street and was charmed with the beauty and quietness of the place. He then continued his journey toward the west, stopping occasionally on the summits of the hills, to enjoy the views. He spent several days in driving through Berkshire County, but was unable to remove from his mind the pleasant and restful vision of Ashfield which he had left behind him, so that he returned, looked over the place once more and finally engaged a home for the summer. He soon after wrote to his brother editor in New York that he had found a paradise among the hills, the haven of rest they had been so long seeking, and bade him come and share it with him.

Professor Norton hired a house for the summer, and the next spring, April, 1865, he secured a deed of the place from the heirs of Jasper Bement. Mr. Curtis came to visit him and the town, tarried with his host over Sunday, and the next summer, 1866,

came with his family to Ashfield. The first year he hired of Mrs. Miranda Alden the house on the "Flat" now owned by the Smith family, soon after, renting the house owned by Moses Cook on the Plain which he bought in 1872. Both houses were large and substantial structures, nearly three-fourths of a century old; Professor Norton's being built in 1794 by Dr. Phineas Bartlett, and Mr. Curtis' at an early date by Levi Cook, the first postmaster in town. They were only about fifty rods apart, and from the library window of each the house of the other was visible. The land of Mr. Curtis extended up to the highway opposite Mr. Norton's house and a footpath was soon made straight across from one house to the other, which, as the years went by, became well worn by the frequent visits of the two friends back and forth.

At the time of their coming here, Professor Norton was associate editor of the *North American Review*, and Mr. Curtis editor of *Harper's Magazine* ("*The Easy Chair*"). But besides their interest in national affairs, they found time to get acquainted with the little town where they had made their home, its circumstances, peculiarities and needs.

About this time efforts were being made to unite the two Congregational churches that had been separated for a dozen years. In a quiet, unobtrusive way, hardly perceptible, but really felt, they threw their influence towards that result, also, after the union, towards securing the old church for a town hall.

As time went by, they became acquainted and familiar with the people of the town. If a town meeting was to be held they were pretty sure to be there, not for the purpose of influencing or criticising the proceedings, but to observe the ways of doing business, to see the citizens in a mass, and also probably to get a little recreation from it. They attended the meetings of the Farmers' Club and entered freely into the discussion with the members. On one such occasion when the subject was "Rural Betterments," Mr. Norton expressed his disapproval of barbed wire fences very strongly, saying he had much more respect for one of the old stone walls our fathers built, covered with beautiful vines, than for these fences. Mr. Alvan Cross, a hard

headed practical farmer, speaking soon after, said he was sorry to disagree with Professor Norton but he had noticed when cattle were turned out to pasture they had little respect for an old stone wall, even if it was partly covered with vines, and were pretty sure to jump over it somewhere, but put up a good, strong barbed wire fence, and after they had tried it two or three times they respected it, and it was for the farmer's interest to have a fence the cattle would respect, whether Professor Norton did or not. Of course, the laugh was on Professor Norton, but Mr. Curtis gallantly came to the rescue of his friend and soon made everything right. Afterwards, two of the most pleasant meetings of the club were held at his place, with Mr. Norton and his family the genial hosts.

The work of Professor Norton and Mr. Curtis in connection with the library and academy has been noticed on other pages. Most of the twenty-three annual lectures which Mr. Curtis gave for the benefit of the library had been delivered the previous winter in the principal cities to large houses, and for which liberal sums were paid. The Ashfield audiences were not always large, but Mr. Curtis made no complaint. Rev. Mr. Greene, as President of the Library Association usually made the arrangements with him for the lecture. One evening, there was quite a thin house, and Mr. Greene, who was of a very sensitive nature, felt deeply hurt at what he considered the slight to Mr. Curtis by the people of the town. After a troubled night in thinking over the matter he made an early call on Mr. Curtis to present his regrets and apologies. He found him cheery as usual, and when he broached the dreaded subject Mr. Curtis said, "O, considering the subject, the night and all the circumstances, I thought we had a very good house." He could name more excuses than the apologist, and Mr. Greene felt much relieved.

Mrs. Amanda F. Hall notes that Mr. Curtis once told her that "Never in larger assemblies did he enjoy such thrilling, intelligent response to his addresses as from his fellow townspeople here."

For the benefit of the library, Professor Norton also occasionally gave readings from Lowell, Longfellow and Emerson,

interspersed with delightful reminiscences of these men whom he so well knew.

Whatever was of general interest to the town, improvement in the roads, old burial places, village betterments, fire protection, and so on, they entered into heartily.

The Academy dinners have already been spoken of. It was plain to be seen that Mr. Curtis and Professor Norton appreciated and enjoyed the success of these dinners.

As nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since these dinners were at the height of interest, we quote an account from one of the leading papers of the state, of the dinner of '87.

### ASHFIELD'S BIG FESTIVAL

#### THE GATHERING OF LITERARY MEN

Speeches by George William Curtis, Prof. C. E. Norton, Prof.

G. Stanley Hall, Charles Dudley Warner

and President Carter.

From Our Special Reporter.

ASHFIELD, Thursday, August 25.

The annual Ashfield dinner, that festival which culminates as well as puts on exhibition the simple, but strong, literary life that pervades this quiet village in the summer, was held to-day, and a fairer sky, brighter sun or more delicious atmosphere never combined more completely to enhance the enjoyment of such an occasion. It has been indeed a rare day, and the practical farmer declares that none better could be made for the celebration. After the incessant rains the sunlight seemed more beautiful than ever while the air combined the freshness of June and the mellowness of autumn. The well-washed roads from all directions lead up to these mountain heights along brooks that have lost none of their clearness through freshets, but babble more distinctly and musically for the increased volume of water. But the beautiful weather was not alone responsible for the large gathering here to-day. For ten years these literary treats have been held with varying interest, until people for twenty miles around plan a regular excursion to attend them. Although there was every prospect last night that the day would be rainy, the three hundred dinner tickets were all sold, and but few of them were taken by natives of the village. A dozen more were crowded around the elastic tables, while fully a hundred were admitted after the dinner to hear the



speakers. While it represents characteristic New England types, the gathering is in many respects unique and remarkable. The plainly finished hall of the quaint old town building with its remarkable tower, was filled with tables, even the high stage behind the speakers being occupied. Clusters of asparagus tops hung from the ceiling, and the buzz of the flies that occupied them was drowned in the hum of expectant voices below, and unnoticed in the silent attention the after-dinner speakers received. At each plate was a bouquet,—a simple, old-fashioned nosegay, with verbenas, sweet peas and plain-colored geraniums. Around the well-filled tables matrons and maidens bustled long before the dinner hour and waited on the hungry visitors as they came in, apparently pleased to see the rapidity with which the food disappeared before appetites made keen by mountain air. Outside the hall, the visitors began to put in their appearance early in the forenoon. The motley collection of teams that invaded every resident's yard in the vicinity and lined the fences resembled the cattle-show gatherings, but the occupants would not be mistaken for the average frequenters of such exhibitions. There were no boisterous or rollicking loads of young people and no noisy groups of children. At least two hundred people waited around the hall for the doors to open at one o'clock. With plenty of ushers to seat the visitors as they crowded in, there was little confusion and no scrambling for seats. The dinner possessed the relish of plain, home-cooked viands simply served.

Along the table facing the audience sat the speakers and their relatives and personal friends. Prof. C. E. Norton was pale from recent illness, but refused to disappoint the audience, although it was thought last evening that he would be unable to preside. On his right sat Charles Dudley Warner, with his large blue eyes scanning the visitors. Next him George William Curtis seemed to lose his customary dignity and reserve in the hearty greetings he received from country folks who took him by the hand. Franklin Carter, president of Williams College, Prof. G. S. Hall of Johns Hopkins, Professor Ware of Columbia College and Principal Hall of the Hartford high school were among the distinguished people there. Professor Norton presided in his usual happy manner, a smile playing around his mouth whether his words were witty or formed polished sentences. He began by bidding the visitors all a welcome, and said he wished "that the hall was as large as our hearts." He then paid eloquent tribute to Rector Greene, Alvan Clarke, and John Field, who had died during the year.

Professor Norton's introduction of the last speaker, George William Curtis, was a peculiarly graceful one, as he quoted from Wordsworth's lines on "The happy warrior" to characterize the editor's life. Mr. Curtis began by apologizing for always speaking on these occasions. He related the story of the witness who said that he was born in a certain town and lived there eighty-seven years, when the lawyer asked him where he had lived before that time. For ten years he had spoken at these dinners, and some one might ask what he did before the dinners began. Williams College, he said, was present in tremendous force. "She gave us a president of the United States and has sent us a president to-day. Williams is the college of Bryant, Garfield and Mark Hopkins, and also of Wadhams, and Stanley Hall, but I must be careful for other college men are present. From the hills little streams flow to the sea, from the hills little boys run whose names in mature life are cherished in every home. When Bryant was a lawyer in Cummington he wrote 'The Water Fowl.' I am sure his eye was set on a little boy who was to come from Plainfield, who has turned his knowledge to patriotic uses, and has strengthened the union of our states. I can characterize that man (Mr. Warner) by the title of his book, 'Summer in a Garden.'" He then referred humorously to the various suggestions about the new academy building, and praised the skill of Professor Ware who had come to advise about its construction. "I am sadly conscious," he said, "that there is nothing left for the last speaker, but I appeal to every man and woman here if there is not a satisfaction in having the last word in behalf of our academy?" Touching allusions were then made to John Field and his gift and after a description of what had been done for the academy, Mr. Curtis made an earnest appeal for its future support.

In their walks and drives about town the nooks and corners of Ashfield were pretty well explored. Cook's hill, the Sanderson hill and Peter hill were favorite resorts. One bright September afternoon when they had visitors, Chief Justice Gray among the rest, the party was seated on the large rock on Sanderson's hill above the village,—now in Mr. Belding's peach orchard, and their talk called forth from Alvan Sanderson, who was at work on the flat below, the remark that he "guessed they must be telling mighty good stories up there, for some pretty big laughs came down once in a while."

In one of these walks on Peter hill, James Russell Lowell expressed a desire to own the Lorenzo Lilly farm for a summer residence. The house is situated about seventeen hundred feet above the level of the sea and commands a fine eastward view. The land extends northward to the summit of the hill, which is one thousand eight hundred and forty feet in height. Professor Norton secured the place for his friend, but the death of Mr. Lowell in 1891, prevented the transfer of the property. The place is now a part of the Norton estate, and the house is the "Lilliput Lodge" which has been occupied for several seasons by Rev. C. B. F. Pease and family.

Mr. Curtis died at his home on Staten Island, N. Y., August 30, 1892. On the arrival of the news at Ashfield the next morning, the bells were tolled and in the evening a citizens' meeting was held and resolutions passed on his death, which were transcribed in the town records. A meeting of the trustees of the Academy was also called and similar resolutions passed which were recorded. Henry S. Ranney, Esq., the veteran town clerk, and Charles Howes, as chairman of the selectmen, were chosen as the town representatives to the funeral. From a New York paper of September 3, 1892, we give a few extracts from an account of the funeral.

No service more simple, more free from pomp and circumstance, could have been arranged than the funeral of George William Curtis. Only three small rooms in the modest cottage where the essayist lived and worked for more than thirty years were opened for the reception of those who attended his funeral. In all, family and friends, there were fewer than half a hundred persons present.

In the darkened parlor to the right of the centre hall the casket rested, and on it was placed a single wreath of white and yellow roses in part, and in part a segment of white lilies of the valley, in which the word "ASHFIELD" was worked in purple flowers. Ashfield is the name of the New England home where George William Curtis rested in his vacations.

Dr. Chadwick's service was concluded without music or ritual, and then the casket was removed to a hearse, and, followed by only four carriages, taken to the Moravian Cemetery at New Dorp. On a knoll overlooking the lower bay and a

broad stretch of the Atlantic is the burial plot of the old Staten Island family, Shaw, of which family Mrs. Curtis is a member. There in 1874, was buried Sarah Shaw Curtis, Mr. Curtis' daughter. There he was buried yesterday. Fewer than a score of people were present when the casket was lowered into the grave. Dr. Chadwick prayed over the grave, and then Professor Norton stepped to the head of the grave and with bowed uncovered head paid a friend's tribute to the character of the man he had loved. What he said no one but the one woman standing nearest the grave heard. When the mound was made they placed over it the one wreath bearing the word "ASHFIELD."

Professor Norton continued the Academy dinners for ten years after Mr. Curtis' death until the twenty-fifth dinner when he decided to cease his connection with them; but he still kept up his interest in the town and in the institutions for which he had done so much. The last summer he was here he was anxious that a civic service committee should be formed, an organized, permanent body working for the general good of the town. Such an organization was started with a few members, and it is for the interest of the town that it be sustained as Professor Norton had suggested. Mr. Norton died October 21, 1908. On learning of his death a well attended meeting of the citizens was held at the town hall and resolutions passed expressing the feeling of loss which the town felt at his death. Dr. G. R. Fessenden and A. D. Daniels were chosen a committee to attend his funeral at Cambridge. On the 23rd at twelve o'clock, the hour of the funeral, the town hall bell was tolled for half an hour.

In 1890, the young people of the town organized a literary association called the "Curtis Club" which became a very interesting and successful institution. In 1896, this club caused a tablet to be erected in the town hall to the memory of Mr. Curtis which was appropriately dedicated, Professor Norton assisting in the ceremony. It is placed at the east side of the door at the north end of the lower town hall and reads as follows:

IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE  
OF GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS AND AS A MEMORIAL  
OF HIS PRESENCE AND SPEECH ON MANY OCCASIONS  
IN THIS HALL, THIS TABLET IS SET UP BY THE  
CURTIS CLUB OF ASHFIELD.  
MDCCCXCVI

After Mr. Norton's death, citizens of the town, by voluntary subscription, procured a tablet to his memory similar to that of Mr. Curtis to be placed on the wall opposite. This reads as follows:

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
CHARLES ELIOT NORTON AND OF HIS LONG AND  
CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP FOR THIS TOWN,  
BY CITIZENS OF ASHFIELD.  
MDCCCCIX

This tablet was unveiled Sept. 21, 1909, quite a gathering of citizens, the teachers and pupils of the Academy and the family of Professor Norton being present at the exercises. The veil was drawn from the tablet by little Virginia Hall, a great-granddaughter of Admiral Farragut, and formally presented to the care of the town by Sanford H. Boice, president of the Civic Service Association. The charge was accepted by Allison G. Howes, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, after which remarks were made by some of the trustees of the Academy and by Rev. Mr. Hallett and Rev. Dr. Jones. Tributes were given as to the interest Mr. Norton had in what was for the best good of the town, also for many kindly deeds rendered in private. Charles Norton, Esq., of New York, feelingly responded for the family, expressing thanks for the erection of the tablet and for the estimation the people of Ashfield had for his father. Miss Lizzie Curtis, by request read a paper on the relation of these two summer residents to the people of the town.

- It was as follows:

It is forty-six years this summer since Professor Norton came to Ashfield in search of health for his eldest son, then a baby. Two years later my father established his summer home here—and for the next twenty-seven years a friendship already sincere and intimate, was broadened and deepened by close and frequent intercourse during three or four months of each year.

What that intercourse meant to the two participants was fully known to no one except themselves; but some of the results of it were seen and felt by their friends and neighbors of this town.



Although their ways of looking at life were superficially very different, Mr. Norton and my father were singularly at one in their principles and ideals. I do not think that any question of moment arose during their joint residence in Ashfield with regard to which their sympathy was not perfect. No matter what task one might undertake, he sought for and received the aid and comfort of the other.

Their public work does not concern us to-day. It is of their love and labor for their summer home that we are now to speak.

Here also they were singularly congenial. Both, I think, held the same opinion of the town which was their residence for a third of the year from choice, not from necessity.

It was not simply as a place of rest and relaxation that they looked on Ashfield, nor was it simply the beauty of its hills, and streams, and woods, that brought them hither year after year. If I apprehend their feeling correctly they believed, and believed intensely, that small towns and villages of this country are its heart, and that the future welfare of the nation depends on keeping that heart sound and true. It was with this end in view that they gave their time and strength to the helping of everything in Ashfield that tended to broaden and deepen the standards of life, and to make living itself more enjoyable.

It was for this reason that they gave every year, some of the best that was in them to the academy and library, holding, as they did, that an uneducated community cannot remain free in the full sense of that word, and that schools and books are essential if Ashfield in the future is not to fall below Ashfield in the past.

That was the feeling which actuated them, and it may, I think, be most clearly expressed in Emerson's words:

"God for the fathers, so for us  
Thou darling town of ours!"

Many tributes have been offered to the memory of these two friends since they ceased to live on earth. Among them there is not one that has not brought pride and gratification to their friends and kindred.

And yet, I think, there is none more beautiful and fitting than the inscriptions on the tablets in this hall, for, as I have already said, the thing they cared for most in Ashfield was not to enjoy her beauty, her rest, her peacefulness. It was to win the good will of their friends and neighbors, and to work with them as fellow-citizens and fellow-residents.



That they won their desire is placed beyond a doubt by the words which their fellow-citizens have dedicated to their memory in the town hall of Ashfield.

Soon after Mr. Curtis was established here, his friend John W. Field of Philadelphia bought land on the hill south of the village and put up substantial buildings there. He became much attached to the town and before his death in 1887 expressed a wish that he might be buried in Ashfield. The kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Field and their liberality towards the Academy and Library have been told in other pages. Mr. Field was buried here but Mrs. Field lost her life in a burning building in London in 1897. A sister of Mrs. Curtis, Mrs. Josephine Lowell, bought of Mr. Moses Cook the house on the hill south of Mrs. Curtis'. She died in 1905. In one of his books on the slums of New York, Jacob Riis speaks of Mrs. Lowell as being among the foremost in settlement work among the poor of that city.

The "Cross Cottage" on the hill, having been conveyed by deed to the Trustees of the Academy by Mrs. Field, it was purchased in 1893 by Loyal Farragut, son of Commodore Farragut, thus adding another sterling citizen to Ashfield's summer residents.

Others are the Morgans in their stone castle on the hill, the Sullivans in "Little Switzerland," Dr. Murray on the old farm bought by the Bement ancestor in 1762, Colonel Emmett on the old Eldredge farm with his view of the South Ashfield valley, Mrs. Underhill on the old Fuller and Barber farm, Revs. Pease and Sewall and Professor Thomas snugly ensconced in their bungalow in the grove above the Bryant place, Misses Warren and Thorpe in the village, the Cockadays, the Browns, Turnbulls, and Butlers in South Ashfield, the Marshalls and Ludwigs at Chapel Falls, Dr. Jones and Miss Low in the heart of the old Steady Lane district, and others.

Besides these, old natives of the town have returned to share in its pleasures as summer residents. Milo M. Belding has not only built for himself a fine summer residence, but has bought up a number of old lots and has made the waste places to blossom

as the rose. President G. Stanley Hall has secured by deed the tiptop of Peter hill where he plans at some future time a lookout summer bungalow. Lucius S. Hall yearned for his old boyhood haunts in New Boston, and bought a farm there.

Ashfield has been fortunate in its summer residents. They have been of a high class, and have had the respect and esteem of the old residents of the town.

## APPENDIX

If any care to look up the town's history further, we would refer them to the Ellis book, two copies of which are in the town library, also several are in the hands of private parties in town. We understand a few copies are left which can be had of Mrs. Geo. W. Ellis of Philadelphia for \$3.00 a copy.

There are many copies of Mr. Barnabas Howes' pamphlets in town and are probably easily accessible. Dr. Packard's book before alluded to gives much ecclesiastical history of the town.

The records of the town are in good condition to be consulted. The large safe and the vault recently built give sufficient space for them to be conveniently arranged.

The State Commissioner of Records now exercises supervision over the preservation of records in the towns, but our excellent town clerks, Mr. Ranney and his worthy successor, John M. Sears, Esq., have been a law unto themselves and have had a conscientious care of the papers relating in any way to the interests of the town. The old records of births, deaths and marriages have, as far as possible, been gathered from various sources and indexed. Many of the old valuation books have been preserved, back to the first assessment in 1766.

The clerk's and treasurer's books of the old proprietors are here, also the records of the first Baptist and Congregational churches. The Diary of Rev. Alvan Sanderson for four years, manuscript copies of his sermons, also those of Rev. Dr. Shepard are preserved here.

A record of an early deed of a "Right" in Huntstown reads thus:

Sept. 13, 1742. Jonathan Nelson of Upton for a consideration of Forty five pounds grants to John Sadler of Deerfield a proprietors Right in the Township Granted by the Great and General Court of this Province to Capt. Hunt's Company on account of their Expedition to Canada, the said Township lying to the west of Deerfield and Joyning there upon the said

John Sadler to perform or cause to be performed the conditions which the General Court require in order to a proprietor holding a right in the said Township, by a proprietors Right in this Deed as means the Sixty third part of the said Township, and the particular Right hereby disposed of is Number 31.

No. 31 was in Baptist Corner. Sadler came here some years after but did not settle on this lot. He lived south of where Charles Hocum does, probably on Lot 62 or 63.

Of the two Captains mentioned on page 231, Benjamin Phillips sold land here in 1792, but was not taxed here in 1795. Captain Benjamin had a son, Benjamin, born in 1752, and some of the records may be of the son. But the query still remains for some future historian to solve as to what became of this man and his descendants. He not only took an active part as an officer of the war, but was prominent in town affairs; was first clerk after the incorporation of the town, and selectman for a number of years. Mr. George Bassett, in a note in the Phillips genealogy, says he was related to the Phillips families here. He is probably the Benjamin Phillips mentioned on page 195 of the genealogy as having been a prisoner at Quebec in 1775. Capt. Ephraim Jennings married a daughter (Mariam) of Chileab Smith. In 1794 he owned land and lived in East Buckland, north of the Mary Lyon place. He died before 1800, and was probably buried in Buckland, although we are unable to find his burial place. He left quite a family of children who went to western New York, where some of the descendants now reside.

Of the five days men enlisted August 17 to August 22, 1777, at the time of the Bennington battle, a note of an interview with Mr. Marcus Parker quotes his words: "My father, Elisha Parker, was in the company that marched to Bennington. They marched to Cheshire the first day where they joined the Berkshire troops, and the next day marched to Bennington." Elisha Parker's name is on the State roll of Captain Jennings' Company for the five day expedition, so it is quite certain that Captain Jennings' Company did go to Bennington. By the reënlistments about this time it seems very probable that both

Captain Phillips' and Captain Jennings' Companies were with Gates at the surrender of Burgoyne.

The following is a recorded list of Revolutionary soldiers drawing pensions in Ashfield in 1832:

	AGE		AGE
Lot Bassett . . . .	77	Wid. Samuel Guilford . . . .	
John Bement . . . .		Solomon Hill . . . .	72
John Belding . . . .	75	Zachariah Howes . . . .	79
Caleb Bryant . . . .	79	Ziba Leonard . . . .	75
Timothy Catlin . . . .	78	Bethuel Lilly . . . .	70
Josiah Fuller . . . .	68	Calvin Maynard . . . .	73
Joseph Gurney . . . .	73	Elisha Parker . . . .	86
Elizabeth Guilford . . . .	74	Caleb Packard . . . .	72
Asa Selden . . . .	72	Laban Stetson . . . .	77
Charles Simpson . . . .	88	Ezekiel Taylor . . . .	75
Jonathan Taylor . . . .	75	David Vincent . . . .	70
Caleb Ward . . . .	78	Stephen Warren . . . .	95

The last pensioner, David Vincent, died in 1848. Stephen Warren died a few months before him.

Allusion has been made to the increase of taxes occasioned by the Civil War. In 1865, the total money tax for the town was \$18,693.75 and a highway tax of \$2000, the sum total being \$20,693.75, making the rate over three per cent. The extra expenses for that year were for town debt \$4500, subscriptions refunded, \$4500. Volunteers (Bounties), \$2375. Those who subscribed for funds to carry on the war and to hire substitutes to prevent a draft had quite a portion refunded to them. But there were those who had sons or other near relatives in the war, and who for this reason did not deem it their duty to subscribe. On such men these taxes fell heavily, having no subscriptions returned to them. Some of these men, who lost sons in the war, were obliged to pay a heavier tax than their neighbors.

In the tax list for 1794, there were eight poll tax payers by the name of Alden, six of Bement, six of Belding, ten of Howes, five of Lillie, and sixteen of Phillips.

March, 1830, "Voted not to license shows and theatrical entertainments in this town," and November, 1814, "Voted to petition Congress to stop carrying or opening the mail on the Sabbath."

The following sketches were written by Mrs. Amanda H. Hall:

### LITTLE SWITZERLAND

In 1837, or thereabout—for I was approaching my ninth year, Mr. John Baldwin and his wife, both formerly of Ashfield, but then living in New York, came to visit at my grandfather's. The year before they went by sailing packet to Europe, and spent several months in London, Paris, and especially among the Alps in Switzerland and Italy.

During this visit they drew freely on a large fund of information concerning what they had enjoyed. One day, after having given us most thrilling descriptions of scenery among the Swiss mountains, my grandfather said, playfully—"After dinner I will take you out to see Ashfield's *little* Switzerland" and gave them the view on the Northwest road, with which we are all so familiar. This they both declared to be worthy of the name, which it has held from that time.

In the early history of New England it was customary (as we all know) in western Massachusetts towns, if not more generally, to give public warning to every stranger coming in for residence, that he might not, in case of adversity or want of thrift, become a public charge and expense.

A man hailing from Shutesbury had appeared in Ashfield. At the next following town meeting the town crier, at a suitable point in the business proceedings, called this man to the floor, saying in forbidding tones, "I warn you—I warn you—I warn you—off the face of God's earth." The astonished and excited man exclaimed, "Why, where shall I go to?"—"Go to Shutesbury where you belong" was the laconic reply. The main point in this incident lay in the fact that at that time Shutesbury was chiefly known as "huckleberry ground," with a large colony of negroes to gather and sell the berries through the Connecticut valley and in near-by hill towns. I remember when at the right season for berries, "Old Newport" and other colored brethren regularly appeared with wagon loads of the berries which they sold from door to door by the bushel or less, or more, bringing along at the same time, their brushes, and other whitewashing regalia for general "jobs" after disposing of their berries. Also that they were easily transformed into chimney sweeps, doing up all that sort of house cleaning for a twelve-month, or till spring cleaning came around again.



## CONCERNING PARSON PORTER

Early in the last century Ashfield hospitality would have been at appalling discount without the daily cups of "flip" or "toddy" offered to friend or stranger as freely as now we serve tea, coffee or broths "between meals" for refreshment of the weary who drop in.

Parson Porter, long revered and beloved pastor here, was a man of much personal dignity and polish of manner, who would have considered it an unpardonable breach of courtesy to decline such hospitality whenever offered. Consequently, when on a round of parish visits, he sometimes yielded to these blandishments too often for his own good.

I have often heard, that, calling at my grandfather's near the end of one such day (his visits were always paid in the saddle) he slipped the bridle of his horse over the hitching post at the gate as he dismounted and went rather uncertainly to the house. It was evident he had already been sufficiently "refreshed," so nothing was offered him. But he was in a social mood and tarried long. Meanwhile his horse had easily freed himself from the post, and was enjoying "refreshment" by the roadside when a neighbor, in passing, who knew the horse, brought him back to the post, slipping the bridle through and over for security.

When Parson Porter left, my grandfather walked with him to the gate, and often described to my willing ears, how gracefully, in his long silken hose and silver buckles, he managed his uncertain legs as he surveyed his horse first from one side, then from the other, exclaiming, "Squire White is it *pos-si-ble* my horse went through that post-hole?"

The many descendants of the Bassett family now living may be interested in the following items:

Rev. Alvan Sanderson's Journal for 1808 says, "June 8, Thursday, married Thomas Bassett to Fanny Sears." Extracts from the diary of Thomas Bassett: "1816 June 5. Season backward. 6 Very cold and windy with snow that laid on the mountain towns. 7 Ground froze half an inch thick. Ice on water half an inch thick in the morning. 8 Still cold and frozen, people with great coats and mittens on. 9th, 10th, and 11th, Wind abated. Still continues cold—fields white with frost—vegetables destroyed. Corn killed quite into the ground—fields barren. 1821, July 4th, Town meeting in Town Hall—

first time. 1822, Jan. 14, George Ranney died. 16th, funeral sermon in town hall. 1823, Oct. 15, Ground froze quite hard. 18th, Snow fell five inches deep. 25th Snow storm good part of the day and night. 26th, More snow, now seven or eight inches deep. Sleighing. 1824, Apr. 6. Frank went by stage to see the Tileston farm. 1827, May 25, Muster in Ashfield."

In the cold year which he chronicles no corn was raised and there was much suffering for lack of food.

Probably few men in the state have had the length of continuous service as stage driver that William Deming had on one stage route from Ashfield to Shelburne Falls for over thirty years. An account of a ride over this route was printed in the *Greenfield Gazette* in 1889 and reprinted in 1906, the year after his death, which gives a very good picture of Mr. Deming and his eccentricities as stage driver under the name of "Sam." Its authorship was credited to Miss Julina O. Hall, sister of Pres. G. Stanley Hall.

### "SAM" THE COACH-DRIVER

Oakfield was never so charming! It was a matter of deep regret to me that morning that my stay must be cut short, but the stage-coach had rumbled up to the hotel, and I must be off.

"Room for me?" I asked of the stout, good-natured driver, as he climbed over the yellow wheels and opened the coach door.

"Well, I reckon so, judgin' from yer present size. But if you should turn out one o' them awful swells, I might have to git ye onto the outside."

He was an unique character. I had ridden with him once before and had good reason to remember him, for never had I so cursed and so blessed an innocent man, all in the same breath, as it were. I was at that moment uncertain whether I should tell him all he had unconsciously done for me, or not, but I had taken the precaution to charge the landlord the night before, to see that I took Sam's coach rather than a rival vehicle which had just been set up, and upon which the public frowned, with some reason.

"Of course," said mine host. "Whoever has been with Sam once never will go with any one else."

I had taken the unoccupied half of the middle seat, and was

congratulating myself that, being the sixth passenger in a three-seated coach, its seating capacity was exhausted and we should now set off without delay.

"Where are you going to put me, driver?" called a voice from outside.

Sam's keen eye surveyed the speaker for an instant:—"Well, the back seat is the safest. You seem to be made out of a little finer clay than most folks, and I'm kind o' fraid you'll break."

"But there are two there now," remonstrated the dude, as he threw away his cigar and peered over his eye-glasses.

"Good land! Do you call that two? That's Deacon Jones and his better half. Look here young man," he continued with a look of serious concern, "are you in the habit of seein' double that way?"

The young man had scarcely climbed in when a buggy drove up from the south village, and an enormous man with a patriarchal beard and the consequential air of a bank-president announced his intention of joining our number.

"Say Captain," said the driver, as he took the new comer's dimensions with his keen gray eye, "have you got your growth?"

"Come now," said the victim, "don't make fun of me before folks. My sensitiveness corresponds to my size. You'd better be thinking what you'd do if the Lord had made you so big."

"Well, so I will. But my impression now without thinkin' the matter over, is that I should go down to New York or Boston, to one o' them boss surgeons and be made over into a pair o' twins."

There was a roar of laughter from the hotel piazza and I understood at once why all the boarders were so fond of seeing the stage off.

But we were not yet en route. There were errands to be stated in Sam's ear by the merchant, the grocer and the tinner, to no one of which did he pay the slightest attention, and I was sure none of them would be done.

"Never you fear," said the deacon, to whom I idly mentioned my impression. "He never forgets anything. If a woman sends for him to match a yard of calico, he takes no rest till that errand is done, just right too. If the commercial interests of the whole nation depended on that purchase he could n't give more attention to it."

"That's so," said the deacon's wife. "And he's got good taste, too. My niece from Albany spent the summer with me last year, and she wanted to get a ribbon to wear to a big party

at the hotel. I told her to send by Sam and you ought to have seen her laugh.

" 'I don't want red and yellow stripes or green and blue plaids,' she said, 'and that's all such a man would see any beauty in.' "

"But I made her try it. I told her to give him a piece of the dress she wanted to wear it with and 'if he don't suit you' say I, 'I'll pay for it myself.' And sure enough he got her the prettiest thing, in soft browns and gold, and she was so astonished she said if ever she came again, she'd save all her spring shopping for him to do. And it does beat all, the way he has of seeing through folks. If he should meet you on the street to-day, he could fit you to a pair of boots a year later, by his eye."

During the "deaconess'" sotto voce eulogy, the horses had jogged on as far as the little group of houses in the valley. Here was a tank of water by the road-side, and while the animals were taking their accustomed draught, an aged man stepped out of a shop opposite.

"Good mornin', Uncle Peter!" said Sam. "How's your rheumatism and your neuralgia and your gout and your heart-disease and your dyspepsia and your measles?"

"Pooty fair! I reckon I'm about as tough as anybody o' my age. Do you see that pile o' shingles? I made all them last week."

"My land! How old be ye?"

"Ninety-one. I'm the oldest man in town."

"Why don't you renew your youth?"

"Well, I'd be mighty glad if I could."

"Easiest thing in the world! See here?" and Sam took up a clean, white shingle fresh from the old man's draw-shave, and with a piece of red chalk from his vest pocket, wrote "91" in large, heavy figures.

"See that?" he said to the old man.

"Yes, Yes! My eyesight is as good as yours."

"Now you turn that upside down, so," Sam continued "and it ain't but 'sixteen.' See? Well, I reckon that if you should just turn over and stand on your head sometime, you would n't be ninety-one but only sixteen."

The horses had finished their draught, but we had scarcely started before another passenger presented herself with "big box, little box, handbox and bundle."

"Why, Jerusha!" exclaimed Sam as he dismounted from his perch to assist her, "be you goin' a visitin'?"

"I was calculating to. Hope you've no objection," was the pert rejoinder.

"Well, I do' know. Have you got your best cap and spectacles?"

"Yes, don't you worry."

"And your black silk apron and your false front and your knitting-work and your fine-tooth comb and your curl papers and your tooth pick and your Testament and your memorandum and your Jamaica ginger and your turkey-tail fan?"

"Come now do let me git in, though I don't see any place for me."

"Did you lock the cupboard and bolt the cellar door and shut down the hatchway and nail up the windows?"

"Yes, Yes! They're all right."

"Well, who's going to feed your chickens and take care of your cat and bring in the eggs and scare the crows away and set the rat-trap and kill the potato bugs?"

"That's all tended to. Anything more?"

"Did you shut the stove damper and leave the fire all safe?"

"Come, if you don't stop your nonsense I'll stay at home."

"Have you had your breakfast and said your prayers?"

"Do let a body alone."

"Well, I can't see but what you're about ready to go."

The helpless victim endured all this tirade like one well fortified against any ills that might befall a traveler, and Sam's round face was as grave as that of a judge of the Inquisition.

With nine in the coach and three on the box, we were increasingly curious as to what would be done with her. Sam gave her the seat he had just left and we were beginning to think he'd have to go afoot himself when he climbed over the side-gear, put his feet on the cross-bar and sat down on the foot-board of the driver's box, amongst the feet of his outside passengers. At the same time he burst out singing the old well known revival hymn,—

"Oh! to be nothing, nothing, nothing!"

It was an amusing, yet most uneventful ride. In the hay-fields along the route, the workmen all seemed to manage to be near enough the roadside to have a word with the jolly driver.

"Hello, Sam! How's your courage this morning?" shouted one.

"First rate! Two Bengal tigers, four hyenas and the snake o' Paradise all ter once wouldn't scare me a bit," was the reply.

"Glad to hear it," said the farmer as he wiped his face with



his gingham sleeve, "'cause I heard you wa'n't goin' to drive stage no more."

"Well that's curious!" said Sam. "I thought the liars was all winter killed this year. They was made for a hot climate, you know."

From the opposite field a red-cheeked youth rushed up to the fence.

"Did you bring down that package for me," he asked.

"Let's see. It was a three cent valentine you wanted me to git, I believe. I'm awful sorry but I did n't git it. You see, I saw her ridin' out with another feller, and I could n't bear to have you waste your money so."

At the Hartland postoffice there were more passengers still. By some magic, Sam had conjured up an "extra" which now drove up along side and a general rearrangement of passengers followed, by which everybody was made more comfortable. The dude and the young school girl with daisies on her hat were in Sam's mind candidates for the back seat together.

"Say, hold on:" he said, as he was about to help the young girl in. "I guess I've made a mistake. I was pairin' you off simply by your size. I forgot one or the other of you might be bashful."

Of course this was just the proper preface to plunging them into a good humored chat. The young man "ventured to presume that he could stand it," and the young girl bowed a little and blushed a little and smiled a little.

Sam encouraged her by promising to "keep an eye on them."

The front seat was given entire to the woman with the baby. In the general revolution I had secured a place on the box. The other vehicle was just ahead of us. It was an open carriage and the sun in our faces gave a show of excuse for the silly couple ahead, but as they whisked on far beyond and out of sight, both under one umbrella, Sam chuckled, "I would n't mind bein' in his place myself, would you?"

"Driver," said I, and I turned upon him as if I were indicting him at the bar, "just own up; that's an old trick of yours."

"No 't'aint! Upon honor? I never tried it but once in my life. I hate flirtin' worse'n I hate hornets, and castor oil and long sermons and smoky stoves and burnt bacon and a hole in my pockets and punched half dollars and mugwumps."

I ignored his categorical tendencies at which the rest laughed, I was too intent. The revelation had got to come now.

"And that 'once' was three years ago last January, in a driving snow storm. I was your victim. You sent me and a



pretty girl on together to catch the first train," said I, and I felt my breath coming hotter and faster as the reminiscence rushed upon me, "and we caught it, I tell you! It was a good scheme; it worked well; I married that girl inside of a year."

"Well! Did you marry her for life, or only till the next divorce court sits?"

"I tell you, there never was such a wife on the face of the earth. It was rather a silly beginning we made. We had to, with all your joking to start us off; but, sir, we should have blessed your name a thousand times over, since then, if only we'd known what it was."

"Sam Tooley, I've no objection to a few blessings provided they're in style. Mebbe it ain't too late now."

I was absorbed in reflections and only half heard the banter with this one and that one that followed.

A clerical looking young man drove past us and stopped with an express package for Sam to take.

"Well, parson, got your sermon done? Is it regeneration or justification or sanctification or botheration this week?"

"I should be happy to have you come and hear for yourself," was the courteous reply.

"I'll give you a text to meditate on next week. 'And the sons of God married the daughters of men.' 'Go thou and do likewise.' 'What thou doest do quickly' and 'rejoice evermore.'"

On reaching the station the coach drove up in the rear and there was a great jingling of cash as we all paid our dues and a great surging of the crowd toward our side of the building. The idlers were all eager to catch Sam's drollery.

"Wait a moment," called the deacon, as the driver started to unload the baggage. "There are two more cents your due."

"Nevermind 'em; just drop 'em into the missionary box. I'm always generous when it's coppers we're talkin' about. Besides they may buy a pious tract, on red-hot brimstone, that'll save a perishin' soul, like as not."

"Now hold on Sam! There is such things as going too far with jokes. I've heard your father was a preacher. I don't see how you dare to make light of serious things."

For the first time that morning Sam's grave face relaxed and he burst out into a rollicking laugh.

"Look o' here!" said he, addressing the crowd generally. 'He says I must n't make light o' hot brimstone. Can't never scratch no more matches, can I?'

The deacon himself concluded to join the laugh. The train whistled and the group dispersed. Sam's passengers went their various ways, wondering why the morning's stage-ride had fatigued them so little.

Summer and winter, in sun and storm, Sam Tooley jogs along the hilly road. Once, twice or three times, as the traveling public demands, he goes over the ground, always ready to do anything demanded of him by letter, or by telephone, or by the living voice. A hearty goodwill towards all mankind,—this is his culture, his politics and his religion.

Let no serious student of sociology affirm that it takes wisdom or wealth or worldly honor to gain the love of one's fellow-men, and the steadfast devotion of a host of friends. A kind heart, a merry mood and an unselfish spirit will make their way into many pleasant walks in life.

The kindliness which a man sows, that shall he also reap.

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A passenger at one time told Mr. Deming he should think he would forget some of his errands, he had so many to do. 'O, no, I never forget, never set down anything either. Why, the other day I had 103 errands to do in Greenfield and had forty-two minutes between trains to do them in. Never forgot one; got 'em all done and had time to eat a piece of custard pie down to the depot before the train came in.'

One morning at the Ashfield Post Office the last part of the winter they were discussing the size of the "dive holes" in the town when the stage driver said, "Your dive holes up here don't begin with some of 'em down in Buckland. I don't pretend to drive into 'em, got my horses trained so they jump right across. Why, the other day I was going across one so, and I looked down under me and there was a yoke of cattle and a load of wood."

An old lady was bewailing the wickedness of such large stories when a gray haired theological professor, who had been over the route many times with the driver said, "O, no, Deming's lies are all white ones, I never knew him to tell a malicious lie."

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF REV. ALVAN SANDERSON  
The Founder of Sanderson Academy.

At the beginning of the year 1808, he notes that he was invited to preach for a short season in Ashfield. In a short time he was requested by the committee to remain four Sabbaths more.

Apr. 3rd. After a town meeting relating to ministerial affairs, was requested to remain 3 Sabbaths more. I consented. April 21. Was notified by a committee of the Ch. and Soc., of an almost unanimous call to settle in this town in the work of the Gospel ministry.

Terms follow. The next week he speaks of calling at Rev. Mr. Porter's of Ashfield, at Rev. Mr. Field's of Charlemont, at Rev. Mr. Spaulding's of Buckland, at Rev. Mr. Miller's of Heath, to Shelburne where he speaks of stopping at Mr. Nim's "to dry me," then at Rev. Mr. Packard's, to Hawley to see Mr. Grout, and to Plainfield to see Mr. Hallock, after which he says:

My object in calling upon so many ministers this week was to obtain their advice concerning my settlement in this town.

May 10th. The committee of the church and town waited on me to converse upon matters relative to my settling here. May 11. Began to write an answer to ye call ye church and town have given me. May 12. Finished writing my answer to ye church and town. Took a copy of it.

The church and town agreed to pay him "\$300 annually so long as they pay Mr. Porter, and after yt time \$400 annually." The contract was made and he "took tea at Esq. Paine's."

17. Wrote upon a discourse. Walked out to see ye people build a staging and seats for installation. 20. Had company—Mr. Miller and wife from Heath. Walked over to ye Meeting-house to see ye people make seats for installation. \* \* \* \*

As has been noted on another page where an account of the installation is given, these seats were arranged around the hollow where the tomb now is, and Mr. Sanderson says it was estimated that three thousand people attended the exercises.

June 11. Rode to ye northwest part of Ashfield—Visited at Mr. J. Taylor's. Preached a lecture at ye school house near Mr. Furbush's. Text, John 5, 25. Made a short visit at Mr. Ezekiel Howes.' Lodged at Mr. Mark Howes.' Made a short visit at Mr. Barnabas Howes,' Mr. Joseph Vincent's and Mr. Thaddeus Rood's. Called at Mr. Joseph Stocking's. Returned home. \* \* \* 19. Visited at Mr. Asa Porter's, Alvan Clark's, Mr. Giles Ranney's, Parsons Mansfield's, Jonathan Gray's. Called likewise at Mr. Case's a member of his family being sick. 20. Rode to Buckland and called at Rev. Mr. Spaulding's. Rode with him to Shelburne to attend a church fast appointed on account of 2 or 3 of the sisters becoming deranged. \* \* \* \*

Aug. 17. Visited at Mr. George Ranney's, Mr. Brown's, Mr. John Bement's, Mr. Burton's and Mr. Joseph Smith's. Called at Wd. Sears'. Returned home. Eve, went with two others to Esq. Williams' to converse with him and Mr. Graves (two brothers in ye church), who had serious difficulties to settle. Tarried there till midnight. They agreed to make satisfaction. Returned. \* \* \* \*

Sept. 1st. Unwell. Rode to Conway. Called at Rev. Mr. Emmerson's and at my brother's. Rode to Ashfield. Attended funeral of Rachel Smith's child. Called at Mr. Ward's, his child continuing very sick. Went to my lodgings. Very much beat out and unwell. Took ye bed.

Sept. 2. Visited at Mr. Ward's whose child is very sick. Visited at Mr. Paul Sears,' who is dangerously sick, and at Mr. A. Goodwin's, whose child is sick. Attended a lecture at ye meetinghouse. After lecture ye chh conferred together on some matters and agreed to set apart Wednesday next as a day of fasting and prayer on account of ye sickness and drought and ye unhappy state of mind two of ye sisters are in. Visited at Mr. Ward's, whose child continues very low. 8. Visited at Mr. Ward's, whose child died this morning. 9. Visited ye wife of Joshua Howes, Jr., she being very sick. 10. Visited at Mr. Stephen Warren's, who has a daughter sick. Visited at Mr. Wing's, his son and son's wife being sick. Visited at Mr. Abner Cranson's, his wife and daughter being sick and a daughter of his died this morning, nearly 17. \* \* \* \*

Oct. 7. Spent some time in bringing home a desk which Mr. Wing has been making for me and in arranging matters after I had brought it home. 8. Rode to Florida to keep the Sabbath there, the people being in a destitute condition. \* \*

\* \* 13. A short season was set apart this afternoon for ye purpose of rendering public praise and thanksgiving to God for ye late displays of his mercy in sending rain from heaven and in arresting ye progress of ye pestilence and causing ye voice of health to be again heard among us. May we have true gratitude and speak of his mercies in ye midst of judgements.

A reliable middle aged citizen says he has heard his parents tell the story of a young man from this town who went to Williams College and for a time roomed with William Cullen Bryant. The said young man was very saving, close and even small, so much so as to call forth an effusion from his poet roommate of which, unfortunately, my informant could recall only these lines:

"Ten thousand souls like his might fly  
In platoons through a needle's eye."

Mr. Bryant, in his early days, during his sojourn in Plainfield, made frequent visits to Ashfield.

Running extracts from old Account Books:

1772. To 50 lbs. beef, 8 shillings.

1 Swine, 84 lbs.,	14 s.	
1 bushel corn,	3 s.	
3 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds butter,	1 s. 11 d.	
1 Gal. Cyder,	8 s.	
1 quart Rhum,	1 s.	
To making one grate Coat and 2 Jacoats,	10 s. 6 d.	
Making 2 bunnets,	2 s.	
To 5 pecks beans, wanting 3 pints,	4 s. 9 d.	
Making coat,	8 s.	
" 1 Pair britches,	6 s.	
boarding the school marm 1 week,	3 s. 6 d.	
To one Die tub,	3 s.	
making 1 pair Shoes,	2 s.	
horse to mill,	3 d.	

In the annals of the churches, allusion has been made to the removal of members to "distant parts." The Smiths, Shepards, Lyons, and some of the Phillipses moved to Stockton and vicinity. The Crosses and Lindsleys went to Greenfield, N. Y., and John

Sadler, who had eight children, to Windsor, N. Y.; in peppermint time the Ranneys, Burnetts and many others to Phelps and vicinity. Joshua Howes went to Mohawk Valley, and as has been noted, Joseph Howes and some of the Phillipses to West Virginia. They sometimes made the journeys with ox teams and were several weeks on the way. In 1816, Elder Ebenezer Smith moved to Stockton in a cart drawn by two yoke of oxen. He took two cows with him and was thirty days on the way. A few years ago it was said the cart wheels were still preserved in Stockton.

Letters frequently come to the town clerk and others, from descendants of some of these settlers in "distant parts," making inquiries concerning their ancestors, and occasionally one drifts back to pore over musty records and mossy tombstones in search of some knowledge of kith and kin.

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#### IN MEMORY OF A NOBLE MAN

On page 384 is noted the dedication of a tablet to the memory of Mr. Curtis, at which time Professor Norton gave an address.

That address is given here.

The meeting was called to order by A. D. Flower, who in behalf of the Curtis Club presented the tablet to the town. "As the years go by," he said, "this tablet will be looked upon by many who did not know Mr. Curtis as we knew him, and the story of his life will be told, his writings more widely read and the high ideals taught by his illustrious example, will be an inspiration to many. The town will forever cherish the deep impress which Mr. Curtis left upon it. We can all call to mind how he looked as he passed through our streets with his elastic, swinging stride, his genial smile, his hearty handshake as he met those he loved to call his neighbors and friends. He was the most affable of men with that grace of manner which puts one immediately at his ease. This tablet is the outward and visible sign of the great respect and affectionate regard in which the town holds the memory of Mr. Curtis." Charles



Howes, chairman of the board of selectmen, received the tablet in behalf of the town in a few appropriate words. The principal speech of the evening was an eloquent tribute by Prof. Charles Eliot Norton to his dead friend, which is given below.

#### PROFESSOR NORTON'S SPEECH

Of all the blessings which can befall a community, there is none greater than the choice of it by a good man for his home, for the example of such a man sets a standard of conduct, and his influence, unconsciously not less than consciously exerted, tends to lift those who come within its circle to his own level. In the quiet annals of this little town there are many incidents of local and personal interest, but the incident of chief importance to its inhabitants of this generation and of coming times, was its selection in 1865 by George William Curtis for his summer home. Hither for 27 summers he came to find refreshment among the hills and woods, to show himself the best of neighbors, and to exhibit those social virtues and charms which would have made him beloved and admired by any society which he might have chosen to adorn.

It is well that the club named in his honor should set up a tablet to commemorate his residence in Ashfield, in this hall where his presence has been so familiar, and where his voice has been so often heard. It is well that the town should accept this tablet as a permanent record of great services rendered to it, and to be sacredly preserved so long as its own ever-renewed life shall last. It is well that we, the townspeople, should meet to dedicate this tablet, the inscription upon which records our lasting and grateful affection for the good man whose name it bears.

Happily there are many men in the world, some even in a little community like this, whom we, speaking in familiar phrase, should call, and rightly call, good men; men who perform fairly well the simple duties of life; who try to be, or at least intend to be, estimable husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, neighbors; but there are few anywhere whose goodness stands, year in, year out, the wear and tear of common days, whose virtues are never dimmed by slow-collecting rust, or by the dust which rises from even worthy toil and unavoidable cares. So, too, it often happens that among many virtues the one is lacking which is required to give savor to all the rest; that some black drop in the blood betrays itself in moroseness; that feebleness of imagination (the great defect of man) shows itself

in failure of sympathetic consideration for those who most need it.

No, the good man, in the full sense of the word, the man whose virtues never suffer eclipse, and whose goodness is not merely good but beautiful, is as rare as he is great a blessing to his kind. Happiest and most blessed of men is the good man whose temperament and character combine to make him as pleasant as he is good; whose virtues are the sweet flowering of his native disposition, trained by experience and perfected by self-discipline; whose character is based on simplicity of heart, and who fulfils the new commandment because for him it is the most natural mode of self-expression. And if to such a man be added great gifts alike of body and of soul, the fine form expressing the fine spirit, the sweet voice attuned to the sweet disposition, if in him outward grace be the type of grace of mind, and physical vigor the emblem of intellectual power; if he be endowed with poetic imagination, quickening the moral and invigorating the intellectual elements of the nature, and if all be crowned by a spirit of devotion to public interests,—then we have such a man as he who fills our memories and our hearts today.

You have seen him in his daily walk during almost 30 years; can you recall one act, one word of his that was not friendly and pleasant? I who knew him from youth to age, I whose life was blessed by his friendship for 43 years, find in my memory of him such pleasantness that my words come short to express it. No one could meet him without being better for the meeting. "He makes you feel pleasant," an old Ashfield man said of him.

In his relations with others, whether in private life or in public affairs, he was singularly exemplary; I mean he set an example of simple excellence to us all, fitted to the various needs and conditions of our lives. And yet his modesty was such, and his simplicity so entire that he walked among us quite unconscious of the virtue which proceeded from him, never assuming an air of superiority, or claiming the distinction which was his due. Seldom has there been so general a favorite as he, and seldom a man who received more flattery with less harm to the simplicity of his nature. When he returned home from Europe in 1850, a youth of 26, with keen perceptions of the delights of life, with accomplishments and graces and tastes that opened every door to him, with literary ambitions which were soon to be gratified by the success of his first book, with the youth of both sexes crowding round him at Newport, at

Saratoga, at New York, to follow his alluring lead, and to catch from him, if they might, the secret of his charm,—at this time he stood at the parting of the ways. As Izaak Walton says of his friend Sir Henry Worton, "His company seemed to be one of the delights of mankind." He was flattered and caressed, and for a time he floated on the swift current of pleasure. It would have been so easy to yield to the temptations of the world! But his pure, youthful heart cherished other idols. He heard the voice of duty saying, "Come, follow me," and he obeyed. The path along which she led was difficult. The times were dark. He recognized the claim which in a democracy like ours the country has on every one of her sons for the best service which he can render. He had a most public soul, and he gave himself without reserve to the cause of justice, of freedom and of popular intelligence.

His first books, poetic records of eastern travel, had shown that he possessed literary gifts of a high order, a style fluent, facile and elegant, capable of conveying clearly the impressions of a sensitive and fine spirit. And the books which followed them gave proof of his delicate sensibilities, and quick and discriminating perceptions. They showed him to be a lover of Nature and of the arts, a shrewd observer of men, an acute critic of life, a delicate and tender humorist. The way of simple literary distinction lay open to him. He felt its charm. Conflict was averse to his nature. But the times called for strenuous action, and with full consciousness of the attractions of the ease and pleasure which he was relinquishing, he turned from the pursuit of literature as an end in itself, and devoted his literary gifts and accomplishments to political and patriotic service.

#### MR. CURTIS'S PROFESSION OF FAITH

In August, 1856, just 40 years ago, at the height of the struggle between the forces of freedom and those of slavery before the war, Mr. Curtis, then 32 years old, delivered at Wesleyan university at Middletown, Ct., an oration on "The duty of the American scholar." It was at once a profession of faith and an appeal to the young scholars of the land to be true to those moral principles which, in a period of material prosperity, are apt to be subordinated to mere temporary interests. It was the first of that long series of speeches which secured to Mr. Curtis a place in the front rank of orators. He had spoken often before in public, but on this occasion he found and manifested his unequivocal vocation as a great master of the art

of persuasive and powerful eloquence. To all her other gifts to him Nature had added those of the orator. He was of a fine presence and easy grace of carriage, tall of stature, of strongly marked and expressive features, with the masculine nose and long upper lip that mark the born public speaker. His voice (it still echoes in our ears) was of wide compass, sweet and full in tone, perfectly under control, and in perfect harmony with his aspect. Not often has a finer instrument of speech been vouchsafed to a man.

"Do you ask me," said he, in his discourse at Middletown, "do you ask me our duty as scholars? Gentlemen, as the American scholar is a man and has a voice in his own government, so his interest in political affairs must precede all others. \* \* \* \* He must recognize that the intelligent exercise of political rights which is a privilege in a monarchy is a duty in a republic. If it clash with his ease, his retirement, his taste, his study, let it clash, but let him do his duty. The course of events is incessant, and when the good deed is slighted the bad deed is done. Young scholars, young Americans, young men, we are all called upon to do a great duty. Nobody is released from it. It is a work to be done by hard strokes everywhere. Brothers, the call has come to us."

From the date of this oration to the end of his life Mr. Curtis never put off the harness or relinquished the arms of public service. He took an active part in the local politics of the county in which he lived, he became a prominent figure in the politics of the state of New York, he exercised a powerful influence by voice and by pen in shaping the policy of the republican party and of the national administration. When the war came—that war which to the generation born since its close seems so remote, but which to us who lived through it is in a sense always present, giving poignancy to the disappointment of many of the high raised hopes of that heroic time,—when the war came, Curtis threw himself into the contest with passionate zeal, passionate but not blind or irrational. In the bitter sacrifices of the war he shared. In 1862 one of his younger brothers fell dead at Fredericksburg at the head of his regiment, thus gloriously ending a stainless life of 26 years. His brother-in-law, the fair young Col. Robert Shaw, dying at the head of his black regiment in the assault on Fort Wagner, and buried with his niggers, became the immortal type to all generations of Americans of the ideal hero of human brotherhood. Of the work which had to be done at home, no less essential than that in the field, no man did more, or more effectively than Curtis.

As political editor of *Harper's Weekly* he exercised an influence not second to that of any other public writer of the time in shaping and confirming popular opinion and sentiment. Nor did his service in this respect end with the war.

Sound in judgment, of clear foresight, of convictions based upon immutable principles, absolutely free from motives of jealousy or ignoble ambition, with no personal ends to serve, neither seeking or desiring public office or other station than that which he held, he acquired not only general public confidence and esteem, but secured also the respect of those who most widely differed from him. No man of such influence, especially with the reasonable class of his fellow-citizens, could escape the enmity of selfish politicians whose interests he opposed and against whose schemes he contended. More than once he became the object of bitter denunciation. He was charged with weakness, with folly, with treachery to his party. The charges never disturbed his serenity, nor drew from him a reply of passion or of personal retort. He was indeed not open to any attack that could disturb the serenity of his soul or the sweetness of his temper. I do not believe that in any controversy in which he was engaged he ever used an unfair word or cast a personal imputation upon his opponent. He did not spare the base, the treacherous and the malignant, but he never dealt an unfair blow, nor in the heat of conflict forgot "the law in calmness made." Wordsworth, in the "Character of the Happy Warrior," drew as with prophetic inspiration the portrait of our friend. Was he not one—

Whose high endeavors are an inward light,  
That makes the path before him always bright;

One—

Who labors good on good to fix, and owes  
To virtue every triumph that he knows.

One—

Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;  
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait  
For wealth or honors, or for worldly state;  
Whom thou must follow, on whose head must fall  
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;  
Whose powers shed round him in the cannon strife  
Or mild concerns of ordinary life  
A constant influence, a peculiar grace.



One, in fine, who—

Plays in the many games of life, that one  
Where what he most doth value must be won?

It was not to service only as a political writer and speaker that our Happy Warrior devoted himself during his long years of incessant toil. Month after month, from the Easy Chair of *Harper's Magazine* he was scattering broadcast seeds of civilization which took root far and wide. In this long series of brief essays treating of a thousand topics, always fresh, always timely, the grace and skill of his literary art were abundantly displayed. He found here a free field for the expression of his humor, his sentiment, his fancy, his good sense, his critical judgment, his strong moral convictions, his wide sympathies. Manners and customs, arts, letters, passing events, life and death, all the concerns of men, furnished subjects for the wise and pleasant discourse in which his own delightful nature was delightfully mirrored. Most of these little papers were slight in fabric and ephemeral in quality, but many of them were of such excellent substance as to have lasting worth, and to deserve a place in literature. And they were more than merely literary essays; they were bodies of doctrine, and it would be hard to estimate too highly the influence they exerted in refining the taste, quickening the moral sensibilities, and raising the standard of feeling in a multitude of readers who stood in need of that culture which these brief lessons were eminently fitted to impart. It was an inestimable benefit to many a reader of scant opportunities for association with the best, to have this monthly intercourse with such a teacher.

#### HIS CONNECTION WITH POLITICAL MATTERS

Conscious of his power and of his influence, aware that from his editor's seat he was helping to shape the policy of parties, to mold the character and to determine the destiny of the nation, it is not strange, however surprising to men of a lower order, that Mr. Curtis never sought for public office, and was never tempted by repeated offers of high station in the public service. Most men would have found it too hard to resist the charm of distinction and of opportunity for the display of talent upon the conspicuous field, which these offers opened to him. The allurements were, indeed, great, but it was not overmastering. He compared one duty with another, and he chose that for which experience had proved his competence.



He was helped in his choice by his preference for simple modes of life, and for quiet domestic joys and social pleasures. He loved his home and his friends too well to quit them for strange courts and brilliant company. And so from year to year he maintained tranquilly his industrious, laborious, unselfish, useful career, with steady increase of his powers, with steady growth in the respect and regard in which he was held by the public, and with the ever deepening love of his friends.

Of all the many public questions of importance which claimed attention in the years following the war, none was of greater concern than the reform of the civil service. The "spoils system" had become rooted in the practice of the government, both local and national, and in the popular theory of its administration. This system by which public office was held to be not a place of trust to be awarded only to such as were competent by character and intelligence to discharge its duties, but a place of emolument given as reward or incentive for partisan or personal services,—this debasing and corrupting system had in the course of years become the source of evils which threatened the very foundation of our institutions. One of the least of these evils was the lowering of the quality of the public service and the degradation of the character of the public servant. To hold public office was no longer a badge of honor, but a token of loss of personal independence and a badge of servitude to a patron. The system poisoned the moral springs of political effort and action; it perverted the nature and the results of elections; it fostered corruption in every department of the government, and tended to vitiate the popular conception of the duty of a citizen in a republic, and of the very ends for which the government exists. To contend against this system, intrenched as it was behind the lines of long custom, defended by the host of selfish, unprincipled and ignorant politicians, and openly supported by both the great parties alike, seemed an almost hopeless task. But Mr. Curtis did not shrink from the contest. He had faith in the good sense of the mass of the people if once they could be roused from their temper of optimistic indifference. The fight had already begun when he entered it, but he had scarcely entered it before he became its leader.

In 1871 he was appointed by General Grant upon the commission to form rules for admission to the public service and regulations to promote its efficiency. He was made chairman of the commission, and their report,—the basis of all that has since been done in the establishment of the reform, was mainly

his work. But the opposition to the project of reform was strenuous, was persistent. The aims of the reformers were often baffled, often defeated. But they were not disheartened. In 1880 the New York civil service reform association was founded, in 1881, the national association for the same end, and of both was Mr. Curtis chosen president. In both he held this office till his death. The duties were arduous, and were performed by him with consummate fidelity and ability. He was a magnificent standard bearer. Slowly, but steadily the cause advanced. He did not live to see its triumph, but he never doubted that it would win the victory. It has triumphed, and for this triumph with all its far-reaching beneficent results, the honor is mainly due to Mr. Curtis, as well as the gratitude of his country for her rescue from a grave peril and a great disgrace.

#### HIS CONNECTION WITH ASHFIELD

It was in the summer of 1864 that Mr. Curtis first came to Ashfield. He spent but a few days here as my guest, but he saw enough of the pleasant village and the beautiful country in which it lies, to induce him to come back to it with his family the next summer, and thenceforth to make it his summer residence. For three years he lived on the Flat, in the old house then unpainted and needing repairs, which has since been modernized and put in order by its owners. Then for five years during my absence he occupied my house, and just before my return he bought the pleasant homestead in which he spent all the remaining summers of his life to the last. Resident here for a good portion of each year, for almost the full term of a generation, his life became closely associated with that of this community, and Ashfield has the right to claim him as her child by adoption and his own choice.

The last 30 years which have witnessed perhaps greater changes in the world than any other similar period ever knew, have brought many changes to our little town. When Mr. Curtis first came here it was more secluded and remote and more tranquil than it is today. It possessed much of the character of an earlier time. It had, indeed, already lost a good part of its population and something of that independence of the rest of the world, which if the 10-mile township had been detached from the earth in the earlier years of the century, and sent spinning in space in an orbit of its own, would have enabled it to maintain itself comfortably on its own resources, mental and material. The 70 varieties of industry which had then been

practiced by its people, had already diminished by more than half. There was hardly a farmhouse in which the whirr of the spinning wheel, and the clash of the loom was still heard. Its little trade with the outer world was carried on mainly by the numerous peddlers, who still resorted to Mr. Bement's store, as a center from which to draw supplies to replenish the stock of their inexhaustible carts. The old-fashioned tavern with its long tradition of good cheer, with its sanded floor, and hospitable bar-room, afforded accommodation to a few travelers, and from its stables, early every morning, the coach, driven alternately by Mr. Cross and Mr. Phillips, the proprietors of the house, set out on its slow journey along the variously picturesque road to the railroad at South Deerfield, whence it returned late in the afternoon. The invasion of summer boarders had not begun. The academy was in a condition of suspended animation, and its old building was sadly out of repair. There was no public library, and the subscription library which had once existed, existed no longer. The two orthodox churches separated only by the width of the street, but divided from each other by the gulf of a bitter quarrel of long standing, rang their rival bells in harsh discord every Sunday, and each congregation prayed for good will on earth, and devoted their schismatic brethren to eternal damnation. The Hoosac tunnel which was to open a way toward the sunset was hardly begun, and many a year was to pass before the thread of electric wire should tie Ashfield to the restless world beyond. For most of the people life was monotonous, for many of them it was as it still is, a life of few active pleasures, and of heavy toil; and many a man and woman fretting against the narrow limits of the farm and restless with the dreams of a wider life, were tempted to bid their little native town farewell, and to try their fortunes in the world which they saw in vision from the mountain-top.

But Ashfield is a place where nature is beautiful, and where man, even yet, has done but little to deface her beauty. Mr. Curtis, lover of nature, and of country pleasures, was attracted by the loveliness of the region, and tired of the bustle, the interruptions, the noise, the multifarious distractions of cities, was no less attracted by its tranquillity and repose. He did not come here to spend an idle and indolent vacation. There was no interruption in the work of the editor of a journal, or in that of the active and leading participant in political affairs. His editorials must be written every week, his enormous correspondence must be regularly cared for. But though he sought

no exemption from labor here, he found refreshment in the fields and woods, and in the placid flow of the days; he had the welcome society of a few familiar friends, and he enjoyed the easy and simple relations which he speedily established with his neighbors. They, in their turn, so soon as their natural suspicion of a strange famous settler among them was overcome, learned to hold him in affectionate respect.—They, you, all learned to know him as one of the friendliest and most simple-hearted of men, ready to take such share as he could in your interests, eager to promote every object for the benefit of the community, helpful in difficulty, a reconciler of differences among neighbors, a wise and sympathetic counselor; kind always and generous, for

July was in his sunny heart,  
October in his liberal hand.

Who that has lived in Ashfield during these years whose life has not been enriched by his presence and his words? Who that attended them will forget the autumn lectures which he gave annually to increase the means for the purchase of books for the library? Who (too few, alas!) that heard his speeches at the academy dinners but must remember them as the most eloquent discourse to which he ever listened. Never, not before the most brilliant audiences, not before the most crowded and excited assembly, did Mr. Curtis speak with more splendid and impressive use of his great power as an orator, than in this little, bare hall of ours, before the scant audience of 300 or 400 plain people. I recall especially two occasions when he rose to such heights of noble and impassioned speech as I never knew him to surpass,—once when indignant with the base attacks made on Mr. Lowell, he spoke of the character of the true American, and in words that came glowing from his heart, set forth his friend as the living exemplar of that character; and once, when having himself been exposed to slander, to abuse, and worst of all to the misconstruction and misjudgment of friends on whom he had relied, he depicted with manly self-assertion, the duty and the position of the independent in politics, in religion, or in whatever field of party strife. These were memorable occasions, and it is well, fellow townsmen, that they and others like them, which have made this modest hall one of the sacred buildings of the commonwealth, should be commemorated by a permanent record upon its walls.

Of all the pleasures and benefits which the retirement of Ashfield afforded him there was perhaps none which Mr.

Curtis more highly valued than the opportunity which the comparative leisure that he found here gave to him for studious reading,—such reading as might keep the springs of his imagination fresh and full, and might increase and perfect his usefulness as a public counselor. “Histories,” says Bacon, “make men wise,” and Curtis was a wide reader of them. Few men had a more exact acquaintance with the political history of the United States, but he was hardly less familiar with that of Old England than of New. But he did not confine himself to these, and the volumes of Gibbon, and of Motley stood as near to his hand as those of Hume, Macaulay or Bancroft. Important as the history of the United States may be, he knew that it was not to be correctly understood or rightly interpreted except as a small fragment of that of mankind and especially of that of the great English race; he knew that such instruction in our own history as is too often given in our public schools was a source not so much of useful knowledge as of dangerous ignorance, illusion and conceit, and that no people can be bred on its own history exclusively without falling into childish and barbaric misconceptions as to its true place in the ranks of civilized communities, and without losing the benefit of those lessons, drawn from the long sad experience of mankind, upon the laying to heart of which its own progress and security depend.

But Mr. Curtis’s days here were not wholly studious. The morning was for work; the afternoon for a walk with friendly companions, or for a long drive over roads, each one of which possesses its special charm of landscape,—it may be the wide open view of hill and dale to where Monadnock rises on the horizon, a pyramid of nature, the monument of solitary past ages to which the pyramids of man seem but of yesterday, or it may be where the shady road runs between bright meadows whose walls are the venerable records in stone of the hard laborious lives of the fathers of the town.

How many are the happy evenings that I recall of gay or serious talk, of music, of all the various pleasures of friendliest social intercourse, and then the lighted lantern, and the late “Good Night!”

It was a wholesome and simple, pleasant life. And controlling it all, diffused through it, was the sweet, high, generous spirit of him who was its central figure, loving and beloved of young and old.



That comely face, that manly brow,  
That cordial hand, that bearing free,  
I see them still, I see them now,  
Shall always see!

And what but gentleness untired,  
And what but noble feeling warm,  
Wherever shown, howe'er inspired  
Is grace, is charm?

The path between his door and mine is no longer worn as of old, the summer has lost its chief delight, but Ashfield is forever dearer for its memories of him, and not in my heart only, but in all our hearts, fellow townsmen, shall remembrance abide to quicken what is best within us, to make us kinder and pleasanter to each other, more public spirited, better citizens and better men.

Even while he was alive and walking with us his figure had an ideal stamp. There was no need of the haze of time and remoteness to give nobility to its outlines, or to bring it into the eye and prospect of our souls apparell'd in more precious habit than it wore in daily life. The actual man, our neighbor, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, member of political conventions, occupied as we all are with commonplace cares and duties, modest, simple as the simplest, one of ourselves, he, even in the prose of life, was a poetic figure, bearing himself above the dust and worry of the earth, and living as a denizen of a world, such as that place which Plutarch says the poets feign for the abode of the gods,—a secure and quiet seat free from all hazards and commotions, untroubled with storms, unclouded, and illumined with a soft serenity and a pure light such as befits a blessed and immortal nature.

Four years have passed since Mr. Curtis's death. The sense of personal bereavement and of public loss does not grow less as time goes on. The great cause of civil service reform has won its triumph, more speedily than he hoped, but vigilance and activity will long be needed to defend its position. New questions have arisen and new perils threaten us. The times have grown darker. No lover of his country can look forward without anxiety. At this moment of popular delusion, of confusion of parties, of excited passions, at this moment, when only a choice of evils seems to lie before us, we long to hear, alas! that we should long in vain, that clear voice of prudent and sagacious counsel to which we were wont to listen for instruction and guidance. Never was there greater need than at this moment of enforcing upon the intelligence and the conscience



of the people the truth that national safety and prosperity rest securely only upon the foundation of moral rectitude, of clearing away the sophistries by which the popular mind is confused and betrayed; of exposing the fallacies and stemming the passion of partisan zeal; of appealing to the true motives which should guide individuals in their political action. This was his work while he lived, and, following his example, this is our work now. The dangers and exigencies of the time are new. The perils that confront us are not transient, nor to be quenched or suppressed by spasmodic effort and the result of an election. The infuriate clamor for war, the eager cry for free silver and fiat money, the demand for subsidy under the name of protection may be suppressed, but they are only the symptoms of disease, and to suppress them is no more a remedy for the disease than to check a fit of coughing by an opiate is a remedy for consumption. The disease is the ignorance and the consequent lack of public morality of a large part of the people of our republic. To contend with this ignorance, to enlighten it, and in enlightening it to overcome it, is our task. It is a long, a difficult, an uncertain fight that lies before us. It is the fight of civilization against barbarism in America. It is the new form of the old good fight, fought ever in different ages under different names.

I was wrong just now in saying that we could not hear the voice of Curtis. He speaks: "Whatever in human nature is hopeful, generous, aspiring—the love of God and trust in man—is arrayed on one side." On that side he stood. On that side let us stand.



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